

Mauritanians demand democracy

HOUEKHOOT (AP) — Fifty leading Mauritanians have sent an open letter to military leader Marouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya demanding democratic rule and an inquiry into the deaths of political detainees. The letter, signed by former cabinet ministers, lawyers, doctors, professors and others, was given to reporters Saturday but dated Thursday. Signatories, including League of Human Rights President Ghali Ould Abdul Hamid, denounced "with all our horror, the magnitude of repression stamped on civilian and military black Africans during the last months of 1990." Amnesty International and other human rights groups have accused the government of killing at least 200 alleged coup plotters in military prisons and police stations. Some allegedly had been tortured. None was tried. Most were black Africans. Observers said Saturday's open letter was the first of its kind, joining Arabs and black Iraq and black militants who want to exclude Africans of Arab descent from the power they currently wield.

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Church urges U.N. action

NEWCASTLE, Northern Ireland (R) — Anglican bishops from around the world Saturday urged the United Nations to take over the running of the occupied territories pending a peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem. The bishops also called on the international community to respond to the "tragic suffering" of displaced peoples, including Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq in huge numbers. A statement issued after a week-long meeting in the Northern Ireland town of Newcastle said: "We call upon the United Nations to assume the administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip from the state of Israel, and to facilitate humane policies for the people of the occupied territories until there is a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli issue." They also demanded international action to ease the plight of Palestinians "suffering inhuman containment, curfews and the continued denial of human rights" in the occupied territories. The meeting was attended by bishops representing 28 churches of the 70-million-strong Anglican Church headed by the new archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey.

Morocco to send 20,000 pilgrims

RABAT (R) — Morocco will send a maximum of 20,000 pilgrims to Mecca this year and most of them will go in groups organized by the authorities. The Ministry of Habous (religious foundations) and Islamic Affairs said on Saturday that private travel agencies will be allowed to cater for only 2,500 pilgrims. Others must register with local authorities who will organize their journey for them. Travel agents will also be supervised by the authorities. Saudi Arabia set a country limit of 1,000 pilgrims for each million inhabitants for this year's pilgrimage. Morocco's population is estimated at 25 million.

Assad discusses peace process with Karami

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday discussed the latest developments in Lebanon with Lebanese Prime Minister Omar Karami, officials said. Vice-President Abdell Halim Khadam, an expert in Lebanese affairs, attended the talks. The Lebanese prime minister visited Damascus one day after President Elias Hrawi declared the start of Lebanon's first year of peace after 16 years. "The situation in Lebanon and measures taken by the Lebanese government to implement the national reconciliation charter were discussed during the meeting," an official said.

China helps Algeria with nuclear research

ALGIERS (R) — China is cooperating with Algeria in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the Foreign Ministry said Saturday. In a brief statement carried by the official news agency APS, the ministry said Algeria had been carrying out nuclear research for several years with various partners, including the International Atomic Energy Agency. On Thursday, the U.S. State Department said it had indications that China was providing nuclear-related assistance to Algeria, but it had "no reason to conclude that China has agreed to provide any assistance for nuclear weapons development."

3 killed, 11 injured in Cameroon rally

YAOUNDE (R) — Three people were killed and 11 seriously wounded when a police man fired into a crowd of anti-government demonstrators at Kumbo Saturday, witnesses in the Cameroon town said. They said protesters demanding an end to one-party rule burnt down a police station, a water corporation office and the city hall in the town, about 300 km. north of the capital Yaounde. Police started firing into the air to stop them marching on the main gendarmerie station. One officer fired directly at the crowd, the witnesses told Reuters by telephone.

Marchers call for release of hostages

LONDON (R) — More than 2,000 people marched through London Saturday to call for the release of British hostages John McCarthy on the fifth anniversary of his capture in Beirut, Brian Keenan of Belfast, who was released by his Beirut captors last August, released yellow balloons to mark the 1,826 days that Mr. McCarthy, a television journalist, has been held. Mr. Keenan, who spent four years' captivity with Mr. McCarthy in a darkened room, held up his hand to the crowd. "Five fingers, five years, five words. Bring this man home now," he said. British businessman Roger Cooper, who was freed by Iran last month after being held on spying charges, said attitudes in Syria and Iran, the countries with the most power to influence the hostage takers, were changing. He said the three remaining British hostages in Lebanon — Mr. McCarthy, church envoy Terry Waite and former fighter pilot Jack Mann — could be freed in the next month or two.

Jordan will not allow 242 and 338 to be sidetracked — Masri

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is more concerned with the substance of negotiations rather than procedural issues or framework for talks to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem, and it believes that an international peace conference is the best forum to achieve a durable, comprehensive settlement, Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri said.

Mr. Masri, who returned home Friday night after two hours of talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva, said the U.S. official had presented the American perspective of peace in the region as reported during his latest swing through the Middle East.

Noting that the Geneva meeting was the first top-level contact between Jordan and the U.S. after the Gulf war, Mr. Masri told Jordan Television that Mr. Baker briefed him on the outcome of his Middle East visit.

No final shape has been given to American ideas or initiatives, Mr. Masri said adding that Mr. Baker had also put to him questions on the issue but he did not provide specific answers.

Mr. Masri reaffirmed Jordan's

determination not to allow the central issue — implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 — to be sidetracked or permit itself to be lured into Israeli traps in the process.

Jordan's position remained unchanged despite some new ideas floated during Mr. Baker's talks with the leaders of Israel, Egypt and Syria, he said.

The minister said Jordanian-American contacts would continue.

"For the Jordanian citizen and for us as officials we see nothing new as such. But there are ideas which are undergoing the crystallization process. But as far as the seriousness of the ideas, the Americans say that they are serious and are seeking to reach a settlement and we could differ with them on some ideas of such settlement, but they say that had they not been serious about a settlement, Baker would not be exerting these intensive efforts and making continued visits to the region, especially as the Gulf crisis and the Gulf war have led to the belief that the world should be committed to the international legitimacy," Mr. Masri said.

Asked whether there was any

change in the Jordanian stand, he said there was none. "If you mean that we are now focusing attention on the essence, I believe that we have to do that because in our view Israel seeks to keep the Arab parties and the United States embroiled in a search for secondary matters so that it would not commit itself to the essence which for us is the land-in-exchange for peace and the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the restoration of the national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

"Israel does not want any party to reach that stage, and therefore it seeks to create ideas outside this framework. In contrast we concentrate on achieving the essence in the first place, but we do not belittle the other matters."

"What we want is to ensure Israel's commitment to the idea of land in exchange for peace and America's commitment too."

The minister said that he and Mr. Baker agreed to continue the dialogue. "The United States has not crystallized yet its ideas and at present the U.S. is floating ideas and therefore there is bound to be another meeting because in



Taher Al Masri

our meeting in Geneva I did not give specific answers to specific questions. We only reviewed ideas which were discussed, and that is all that happened."

Earlier, Mr. Masri denied a report by Radio Monte Carlo which said that Jordan was ready to attend any conference on the Middle East. The minister stressed that an international conference was the best framework for making progress towards peace.

Mr. Masri said that he reiterated Jordan's position and demand for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region as soon as possible through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and on the basis of exchanging land for peace.

Mr. Masri said he stressed Jordan's view that the Palestinian people should be able to take part

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Israel plans to step up settlements in occupied lands

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli leaders Saturday insisted, in defiance to American opposition, that Jewish settlements would continue to be built in the occupied territories.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said he believed the settlements would have nothing to do with peace efforts or be an obstacle in getting a U.S.-sponsored regional conference with Arab states started.

"I don't see anything special or important about the (settlements) that can have an influence on the negotiations going on today," Mr. Shamir said in an interview with Israel Radio broadcast Saturday.

"The matter of settlements is not relative to the peace process," he added.

Secretary of State James Baker, who concluded a two-day visit to the Jewish state earlier this week, repeated the U.S. position that settlements are an obstacle to any land-for-peace agreement with Arab states and the Palesti-

nians in the occupied territories.

Mr. Baker reportedly said Jewish settlements raised a lot of emotional reaction from Arab states and indicated he thought that it could cause problems in getting peace talks started.

Israel has cautiously endorsed the idea of a regional peace conference but steadfastly opposed "territorial concessions."

Mr. Shamir's remarks came during a reported wave of building in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip where some 85,000 Jews live among 1.9 million Palestinians.

Defence Minister Moshe Arens told Israel Radio Saturday that settlement building was proceeding according to government guidelines.

"The government of Israel will not be the government that stops Jews from settling in (the West Bank) or (Arab) Jerusalem," Mr. Arens said.

Mr. Arens statement follows the establishment of a new Jewish settlement this week in the occu-

pied West Bank and radio reports that 800 caravans have been taken to the occupied territories for the Gush Emunim settlement movement.

Gush Emunim said they were promised an additional 200 caravans and are seeking even more.

In addition to this, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has pledged to build 13,000 new housing units in the occupied territories over the next two years for more settlers.

Israeli weekend newspapers reported what they called "the biggest flurry of building" in the West Bank in the past ten years.

U.N. resolutions call for Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands and the United States sees the settlement of Jews in the occupied territories as an obstacle to peace.

Mr. Arens said he and Mr. Baker had not even discussed one of the most contentious problems — how Palestinians would be

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U.N. force chief lands in Kuwait

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Austrian Major-General Gunther Greindl arrived Saturday to start creating a United Nations force to keep the peace between Iraq and Kuwait.

"I think it's a tough assignment," the new commander told reporters.

"I hope that with the cooperation of all concerned I will be able to set up this mission successfully and in good time."

Gen. Greindl arrived with a 30-man advance party. After talks with Kuwaiti officials he hoped to go to Baghdad on Sunday to discuss his mission with the Iraqi government.

He said he did not know when his force — 1,440 soldiers from 31 countries — would start policing the frontier.

U.S. troops have already started pulling back from positions in southern Iraq held since the end of the Gulf war in late February. Their withdrawal will be completed after the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) is in place.

The U.N. force — 300 military observers backed by 680 ground troops, mine-clearing units and air support — will patrol a demilitarized zone along the border.

Under a ceasefire which went into force this week, the zone will stretch 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

Geo. Greindl met with government officials in Kuwait City.

"It's a difficult job," Gen. Greindl told journalists at an impromptu news conference on the tarmac of the Kuwait international airport. "You have a lot of problems and a lot of things that have to be looked over."

He said troops could begin arriving Monday, but he declined to say when they would be in place at the border.

"We will have them there as soon as possible," said the general, dressed in a forest green military uniform and wearing the sky blue beret of the United Nations.

Asked whether he thought his force would be able to care for thousands of Iraqis in the zone previously held by the Americans, Gen. Greindl said:

"We are here to observe a demilitarized zone with the authority of the Security Council. I think we can give the service that the council expects of us."

But he added: "We are an observer mission...all physical actions by observers are precluded."

More than 10,000 Iraqis have fled into refugee camps in the border area to escape fighting in southern Iraq cities between the army and Shiite rebels.

U.S. troops are still well within Iraqi territory but were dismantling checkpoints Saturday.

A Reuters correspondent in the border area saw hundreds of Iraqis heading south from territory evacuated by U.S. forces into the demilitarized zone to be policed by the U.N. peacekeepers.

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Iraq says foreign powers orchestrated Kurdish unrest

A SENIOR IRAQI official Saturday accused Western countries of creating and exaggerating the Kurdish refugee problem.

Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister, told reporters Baghdad supported Arab solidarity, but rejected what he called imperialist solutions to the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Aziz spoke after meeting with Sudan's military ruler Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, one of Iraq's main supporters during the Gulf war. His comments were distributed by the Sudan news agency (SUNA).

Mr. Aziz said that "imperialist powers created and inflated the Kurdish refugee problem" after failing to bring about the disintegration of Iraq, the agency said.

Mr. Aziz did not identify the powers he had in mind, but he clearly meant the United States, Britain and other Western countries.

The Iraqi government has ended Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq, causing hundreds of thousands of Kurds to flee to neighbouring Iran and Turkey.

An international relief campaign has been launched to help them.

Mr. Aziz reiterated Baghdad's

rejection of a British proposal to establish a "safe haven" for the Kurds in northern Iraq. He said Iraq had given the Kurds self-rule since 1974. He said the imperialist powers were only offering Kurds "false sympathy."

He said he relayed a verbal message from President Saddam Hussein to Gen. Bashir "dealing with the brotherly relations between Sudan and Iraq, the current situation in the Arab arena and the threats to which the Arab World is exposed."

Mr. Aziz said the Arab World, deeply split over Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, needed joint action based on "the fundamental interests of the Arab Nation rather than imperialist and Zionist designs."

"Iraq does not accept any action imposed upon the Arabs by imperialism to achieve its own ends," he said.

Mr. Aziz arrived in Khartoum Friday.

Iraq, its army in firm control of its northeastern provinces after Kurdish rebellion, is urging hundreds of thousands of refugees to return to their homes.

Ten days after the recapture of the town of Sulaimaniyah, signalling the end of the month-long rebellion, some families are start-

ing to filter back to their homes. But there is no sign of a mass return from the Turkish and Iranian borders where, according to estimates made outside the country, a third of Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds have taken refuge.

"The government has extended the grace period that was given to those people, including all the people that were in the rebellion," Baba'uddin Ahmad, speaker of the elected legislative council of the autonomous Iraqi region of Kurdistan, told foreign journalists visiting Erbil Saturday.

Mr. Ahmad, who stressed the amnesty did not cover murderers, thieves and rapists, said the region's legislative and executive councils met earlier in the day to discuss conditions in Kurdistan.

Erbil, set on a plain 350 kilometres north of Baghdad, is the administrative capital of Iraqi Kurdistan and had a peacetime population of 100,000.

It bore the scars of fierce fighting.

Government officials said the rebels seized the city on March 11 and held it for 20 days.

Jafar Al Barazanchi, chairman of the region's executive council, told a news conference many families had come back.

Bush to increase aid to Kurds, but will stay out of rebellion

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. PRESIDENT George Bush promised Saturday to provide relief to Kurdish refugees in Iraq but pledged that no American soldier would be "shoved into a civil war in Iraq that's been going on for ages."

In a speech at an Alabama university, Mr. Bush reiterated the administration's line of warning Iraq against attacking the Kurds in the sanctuary zone but promising to pull U.S. forces out of southern Iraq.

Mr. Bush's wide-ranging remarks also focused on European and Soviet relations in the "new world order" after the demise of the cold war. Mr. Bush said the path of reform in the Soviet Union "must proceed."

He said the United States "will not tolerate any interference in this massive relief operation. We will want to help the Iraqi refugees..."

Mr. Bush again insisted that President Saddam Hussein must be removed from power before Iraq can rejoin the world community.

"With Saddam in power, Iraq will remain a pariah nation," Mr.

Bush said.

Critics have accused Mr. Bush of verbally inciting the Iraqi people to overthrow President Saddam, but failing to provide any military assistance to help the effort.

"Internal conflicts have been raging in Iraq for many years," he said. "We're going to continue to help these refugees, but I do not want any single soldier or airman shoved into a civil war in Iraq that's been going on for ages."

Mr. Bush is using a series of commencement speeches to lay out U.S. domestic and foreign policy goals after the Gulf war and other dramatic world changes. Aides said he planned to give sharper definition to his often-used phrase, "new world order."

The United States is participating in a massive international relief effort for hundreds of thousands of Kurds fleeing their homes in northern Iraq.

Temporary refugee camps are being set up and food is being airlifted to the Kurds, many of whom are camped on the borders between Iraq and Turkey and Iran.

Their plight has led to some

criticism of Mr. Bush for not defending the Kurds.

Mr. Bush said the United States would not tolerate any interference in the relief efforts, a clear warning to Iraq's army. Earlier this week the United States warned Iraq against military operations which would threaten the relief efforts north of the 36th parallel, which cuts a swathe against northern Iraq.

But he said the United States had entered the Gulf war to carry out specific objectives, backed by United Nations resolutions demanding that Iraq's troops leave Kuwait.

"We set our objectives. These objectives, sanctioned by international law, have been achieved. I made very clear that when these objectives were obtained, our troops would be coming home," he said.

At Britain's instigation, the five permanent members of the Security Council Friday discussed setting up safety zones for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq but few expect any formal Security Council action.

Envoys from the United States,

(Continued on page 5)



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U.N. chief outlines Palestinians' problems, says protection needed

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The U.N. Secretary-General said Friday Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories suffered greatly during the Gulf war and that they need protection from occupation abuses.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said he would explore having the parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention meet to discuss how to help the Palestinians.

The convention covers protection of civilians in occupied lands, and Mr. Perez de Cuellar noted, provides for the appointment of a protecting power to oversee rights of occupied peoples.

Also Friday, the five permanent members of the Security Council discussed setting up safety zones for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq, but reached no conclusions, according to Western diplomats.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said his report to the Security Council was based on a 10-day visit by his representative, Jean-Claude Aime, to the area in March; and data from the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinians in the Near East.

The Security Council requested

the report in a December resolution, which called for protection of the Palestinians.

"Israel clearly had a right to take what it considered to be appropriate measures to defend itself in the face of the (wartime) threat articulated against it," said Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

But Israel also had an obligation to protect the Palestinians, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, he said.

Instead, during the Gulf war, Palestinians suffered from "inadequate" civil defence protection, including a lack of gas masks, curfews, expulsions, closures of schools and colleges, demolitions of homes and other collective punishments that violate the convention, he said.

Israel coopts the convention does not apply to the occupied territories.

Remittances and transfers from the Gulf region plummeted, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said, while on the political level, widespread Palestinian support for Iraq led to increased tension between Palestinians and Israelis.

He noted that Palestinians publicly rejoiced when Iraq launched

missiles at Israel during January and February.

Curfews badly affected the Palestinians, by curtailing medical care and by preventing 150,000 day labourers from working for about four weeks in Israel, where many must commute to find jobs.

"Palestinian support for Iraq led to increased tension between the inhabitants of the occupied territories and the Israeli security forces and, more broadly, cost the Palestinians much goodwill," Mr. Perez de Cuellar added.

The report was mandated under a Security Council resolution passed in December criticising Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The resolution asked Mr. Perez de Cuellar to monitor the occupied territories.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said tensions during the Gulf crisis were exacerbated by violence in Jerusalem last October that left at least 17 Palestinians dead and more than 20 Israelis wounded.

"These tragic events once again highlighted the need for greater safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation," Mr.

Perez de Cuellar said.

He also criticised travel restrictions, expulsions and a curfew that Israel subsequently imposed and called detentions and "collective punishments" such as school closures and demolition of homes a "cause for concern."

The mood changed after the Gulf war ended. "There was a general feeling of relief, among Palestinians and Israelis alike, that the war was over," said Mr. Perez de Cuellar. "Yet on the Palestinian side, there was great uneasiness and apprehension about what the future would hold."

Tens of thousands of Palestinians had no work, he said.

Israeli officials told the U.N. they were aware the economy in the occupied territories had weakened and said some Palestinians would be reabsorbed into Israel's labour market.

"An alternative source of employment would, however, have to be found for those workers who would not be given jobs," the report said.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said he was considering sending an economic mission to the occupied territories to develop income-generating projects.

Turkish soldiers shoot Kurds over aid parcel

ULUDERE, Turkey (R) — A Turkish soldier shot dead a young Kurdish refugee running to pick up a parachute aid parcel in this sprawling mountain camp on the border with Iraq, witnesses said.

They said 21-year-old Miro Ahmad was shot dead Friday as he ran towards a package dropped from one of the Western transport planes which have started flying regularly above Isikveren camp near Uludere.

"He was shot here," said one young Kurd who witnessed the shooting, sticking two fingers below his chin to show where the bullet entered.

Refugees at the bleak camp in southeast Turkey, squatted home to up to 200,000 fleeing Iraqis, say army guards have drawn an invisible dividing line. If a parcel lands on one side of the line, soldiers claim, it is booty to be sold to the Kurds. If it falls nearer the camp, the refugees can have it.

The refugees say Miro fell foul of this cynical system.

Within two hours Miro's relatives had wrapped his body in

plastic sheeting and buried him on a muddy plateau that serves as a cemetery, without the normal ceremonies.

"His fiancée, mother, father and brother were there," said Christophe Nick, a reporter for the French magazine Actual.

"They were tearing their hair and wailing. His body was covered in bandages of hair when he was buried. It was pathetic."

Soldiers said they knew nothing of the shooting, insisting they only ever fired in the air, but refugees said Miro's death was no exception.

"Every day there is a killing. I don't know how many but every day there is a shooting," said a 40-year-old school teacher from Zakho, who did not want to be named.

"They treat us as if we were animals," said a 22-year-old Kurdish student called Aref.

GPT, the refugee settlements along the Iraq-Turkish border, Isikveren saw the most dramatic influx after the Iraqi army coded the Kurdish rebellion.

Shots ring out continually as soldiers try to deter increasingly hungry and desperate refugees from flooding into the fertile valleys.

"If we do not stop them they will all go into Turkey — what would we do with one million people?" asked a lieutenant wearing the blue beret that distinguishes Turkish commandos.

During our tour of the camp, hundreds of men, women and children sprinted down the slopes after spotting a lorry full of loaves at an army base camp lower down.

But the base camp is off-limits to refugees, a rule enforced by the soldiers who kept the crowd away by lashing out with canes. The soldiers were outnumbered, but the threat of their guns kept the Kurds at bay.

Until a week ago the army allowed refugees down to the base camp, but drove them all back onto the slopes, where their numbers increased.

Now only the very old and sick have access to the newly-erected Turkish Red Crescent tents at the

base camp.

Profiteering is rife. We saw soldiers pocketing boxes of pills handed out, seemingly at random, by ambulances touring the camp. Refugees said the army often stole food intended for them.

A worker for the international charity Medecins Sans Frontieres, setting up the first foreign medical tent inside the camp, said medicine and food brought to Uludere by the Red Crescent at the start of the crisis vanished mysteriously.

Some aid now getting through to the camp, nearly 2,000 metres above sea-level. Trucks carrying bread, rice, milk and potatoes edged up the slippery track on Friday, followed by a score of ambulances.

Access to the camp is a problem. In the past, trucks drive from the nearest town, Cizre, and then another half-hour walk. The narrow road is too narrow for two vehicles to pass, so the two-hour walk uphill can be quicker than driving.

34 nations to participate in Gulf peacekeeping force

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar announced Friday that 34 nations, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, would contribute forces to the new 1,440-man peacekeeping mission in the Gulf.

It would be the first time officers from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China were serving in the same U.N. contingent.

In a letter to Security Council President Paul Norderdame of Belgium, the secretary-general said he intended "to proceed without delay" with the deployment of the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, known as UNIKOM.

An advance party of U.N. peacekeepers begins preparations to patrol the Kuwait-Iraqi border on Saturday, U.N. officials hope the mission can be in place within two weeks.

The 30-man team, led by Major General Gunther Greindl of Austria, was to talk to Kuwait officials Saturday about setting up forces in a demilitarised buffer zone, after which they will go to Baghdad for similar discussions.

The 34 countries have all volunteered contingents for UNIKOM. In addition to the five permanent members they are

Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela.

He said Switzerland had also informed him of its willingness to contribute to UNIKOM but did not make clear what function the Swiss might have.

The task of UNIKOM is to deter violations and observe any potentially hostile actions along the border.

The mission is to comprise 300 unarmed military observers, protected initially by five infantry companies totalling 680 men to provide security, as well as a field engineering unit to help clear mines, a logistics unit and an air unit with planes and helicopters.

The Security Council's declaration of a permanent ceasefire on Thursday permitted the deployment of UNIKOM which will be deployed as U.S. troops withdraw from southern Iraq.

A 5,000-member unit of the second armoured U.S. cavalry had already begun pulling out last weekend following Baghdad's acceptance of stipulations for a permanent ceasefire ending the Gulf war.

Life in Baghdad — slow return to normal

BAGHDAD (R) — Roses are in bloom on Baghdad Island, but the fairground roller-coaster stands idle, left without power by the first U.S. air strike of the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

The park, once the favourite weekend haunt of thousands of families, is a reminder of how things have changed in a city that has forgotten the pleasures of relaxing in public.

"Before the war many people used to come here," said Adnan, a 27-year-old attendant, on Friday. "Now we get very few."

"Thirty yesterday but never more than 60 or 70."

As he spoke, a handful of people strolled through the gardens, once a favourite picnic venue on reclaimed land by the Tigris River on the northern outskirts of the capital.

The park has a theatre, cinema, restaurants, swimming pools, bowling alley, a huge lake, a fairground, and a children's playground.

On Friday, once the park's busiest day, all but one kiosk was closed. In the empty theatre, birds nested in the stage lighting.

Elsewhere in the capital, life is becoming easier.

The army is still visibly in control. Armed soldiers man checkpoints at key intersections

but in other ways, life is regaining some of the trappings of normality.

The streets around Al Khadimiya mosque in a northwestern Shiite district were bustling. Shops were open and crowds moved around after Friday prayers.

Children absolved from the Ramadan fast nibbled at cakes and bread. Adults hurried to and fro with food for the first meal of the day after the fast ends at sunset.

Residents say supplies of water and electricity are back, though intermittent in some districts.

Food is available. The government provides rations of flour, sugar, rice, cooking oil and other essentials at subsidised prices.

There are no telephone links and residents say privately they often have to augment food supplies expensively on the black market.

Petrol is a particular headache. The ration — 30 litres every 20 days — barely covers journeys to work. With black market prices up to 100 times the 90-fils (30 cents) a litre price on a ration card, many families have taken to sharing cars.

And a day out in Baghdad's Park has become a thing of the past.

Emir of Bahrain joins call for Arab reconciliation

BAHRAIN (AP) — The emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, Saturday joined in the mounting calls for the healing of Arab ranks split by the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

"Now, more than ever before, we must unify our stand and evaluate the experiences we have been through," Sheikh Isa said in an interview with the Kuwaiti daily Al Sayassah, published simultaneously in Bahraini newspapers.

The emir urged a frank dialogue for the reconciliation process and said this would be in the joint interest of the Arab states.

There should be "an honest

appraisal of all Arab issues in a manner to guarantee life of peace and the building of a strong Arab World that will no longer be racked by conflict," he added.

This was particularly necessary for the Arab Nation in a world gradually being dominated by economic blocs, the emir advised.

He said the Arabs also would like to see a unified Iraq with internal divisions surmounted so that Baghdad can also play its role in a strong pan-Arab nation.

He did not mention President Saddam Hussein by name but stressed the onerous Iraq was an internal matter "and the Iraqi nation alone can choose the political system that satisfies it."

Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait split the Arab World between its supporters and the Saudi Arabian-led group of Arab states who rallied international support to end the occupation.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a key ally of these Gulf states, said Thursday at a Muslim religious ceremony that the Arabs should get together and put the divisions of the Gulf crisis behind them.

About a month after the Gulf war, Cairo hosted a low-level meeting of the 21-member Arab League where efforts began for

healing the Arab ranks. That meeting was attended by a representative of Iraq.

Sheikh Isa also said that his country was against any division of Iraq.

"What is happening now in Iraq is an internal affair and concerns only the Iraqi people," he told Al Sayassah. "But at the same time we are against the division of Iraq. We want it unified."

Sheikh Isa said the Arab World had long suffered from division and partition. (for this reason) we want a unified Iraq, able to make its people live in security and stability.

also were anticipated, he said.

He said the projected cost of the firefighting operation — up to \$430 million — would not be increased by the new strategy if, as hoped, the fires could be put out in seven months rather than the initial projection of two years.

This would cut the amount of oil losses from \$43 billion to \$12.5 billion, he said. He estimated that fires are burning up about six million barrels of oil a day, a daily loss of about \$120 million.

Also damaged are Kuwait's pipelines, ports and refineries, completely shutting down the emirate's dominant industry.

Kuwait to speed up battle against oil fire

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Kuwait plans to hire more teams from around the world in an effort to cut by almost three-fourths the time needed to put out more than 500 oil well fires burning since the Gulf war, the oil minister said Saturday.

One Canadian and three U.S. companies are currently fighting the fires.

As of early Saturday, two of the fires had been put out, and 23 other wells that were spewing oil had been capped. In all, about 600 oil wells were blown up before the Gulf war ended on Feb. 28, including about 520 that caught fire and about 80 that spewed oil without burning.

"I'm not disappointed, but I'm concerned about the pace," Oil Minister Rasheed Al Amiri told reporters. By hiring more teams, he said, it might take seven months to extinguish the fires, rather than two years.

He said he had not discussed his new plans with the four companies now on the job — Red Adair Co. and Boots and Coots Co. of Houston, Texas, Wild Well Control Co. of Spring, Texas, and Safety Boss of Calgary, Alberta.

"It will be a surprise," he said. "It will make them work harder."

He repeatedly described these four firms as "the best in the

world" but made clear his conviction that the disaster was too big for them.

"They have never faced 500 fires," he said.

Al Amiri declined to say how many new firefighting teams would be added or where they would come from, but indicated there would be many and that some would be provided by foreign governments.

He said he had been consulting with officials from Britain, France, China, Germany, Iran and other countries about their possible participation in the effort. Additional U.S. teams

also were anticipated, he said.

He said the projected cost of the firefighting operation — up to \$430 million — would not be increased by the new strategy if, as hoped, the fires could be put out in seven months rather than the initial projection of two years.

This would cut the amount of oil losses from \$43 billion to \$12.5 billion, he said. He estimated that fires are burning up about six million barrels of oil a day, a daily loss of about \$120 million.

Also damaged are Kuwait's pipelines, ports and refineries, completely shutting down the emirate's dominant industry.

Rebuilding Kuwait 'not a gold rush' for U.S. companies

WASHINGTON (AP) — The rebuilding of Kuwait, while offering opportunities for small U.S. companies, "is not a gold rush," a Commerce Department official cautioned Friday.

"We're counseling patience," said David Jensen, deputy assistant secretary of commerce for Africa, the Near East and South Asia. "This is not a gold rush; this is not going to happen quickly."

He was speaking at a hearing of the House Small Business Subcommittee on Exports, tax policy and special problems.

Since the end of the Gulf war, there has been optimism in Congress

and the country about the opportunities for small businesses to work alongside America's corporate giants in rebuilding Kuwait. Lawmakers and government agencies have been besieged by calls from small companies and unemployed workers.

Kuwait's reconstruction, which will cost an estimated \$100 billion, could become the biggest rebuilding effort since the Marshall plan reconstruction of Europe after World War II.

Kuwait's ambassador to the United States has said around 70 per cent of all reconstruction contracts are expected to go to U.S. companies.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Power, water supplies restored to Basra

NICOSIA (R) — Electricity and water supplies have been restored to most residential areas of Iraq's southern Basra governorate, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Saturday. The announcement coincided with Iranian reports that rebels had clashed with government troops on Friday night in the port of Basra and that fighting was still going on in Amara and Nassiriya, north and north-west of the provincial capital. Basra, Iraq's second city, was heavily bombed by the U.S.-led allies during the six-week Gulf war. It also saw fierce fighting when Shiite Muslim Rebels rebelled immediately after the war ended on Feb. 28. INA quoted Basra Governor Latif Hammoud as saying two power plants, heavily damaged by "imperialist aggression and acts of sabotage," had been repaired. He said power would be restored to the entire governorate within a few days. Mr. Hammoud said the water supply system and sewers had been completely repaired and all areas in the governorate had pure drinking water.

Iraqi missile failed to explode on impact

TEL AVIV (AP) — One of the Iraqi missiles fired at Israel during the opening stages on the Gulf war slammed into a densely populated area of greater Tel Aviv but failed to explode, Israeli censors revealed Saturday. CNN television and the New York Times both reported it at the time, but others, like the Associated Press, were not allowed to use it. The warhead crashed through an empty three-storey apartment building before finally coming to rest in a ground floor jewelry shop. Residents in a three-square-kilometre radius of the shop were ordered to leave the rooms they had sealed in case of a chemical attack and enter their bomb shelters as army sappers defused the 300 kilogramme warhead. The missile was later taken to an army base for display. During the war, Israeli censors deleted from news stories details they feared could help Iraq aim subsequent missile barrages. CNN and NBC television networks had had their broadcasts cut for short periods after censors complained that revealing details would give live on the air. Censors are still not allowing the exact date or site of impact of the unexploded Scud to be published. Iraq fired a total of 39 Scud missiles at Israel in 18 barrages during the Gulf war. Two people were killed and 230 were wounded and nearly 11,000 apartments were damaged or destroyed.

Tunisia expels British journalist

TUNIS (AP) — The government has ordered the bureau chief of the British news agency Reuters out of the country for spreading "deliberate disinformation," a government official said Saturday. Jonathan Wright, a 37-year-old Briton who has been stationed in Tunisia for three years, committed "a series of misreporting... based on hearsay," according to the official, who would not be further identified. Mr. Wright "practiced deliberate disinformation" and was informed Friday that he must leave the country by Sunday, the official said. During the Gulf war, Mr. Wright reported that two people were killed in a pro-Iraqi demonstration in central Tunisia, a report denied by the government. Tunisia was on Iraq's side during the war, and bristles at what it views as negative reporting of its anti-allied coalition stand during the conflict. The journalist also reported that after Tunisia established the committee for human rights and fundamental liberties, made up of government officials, there were numerous arrests of people in Islamic circles in the country. Thar and other reports based on information from Islamic sources whom Mr. Wright refused to identify for their safety angered the government.

Dutch police hold eight over firebomb

AMSTERDAM (R) — Dutch police said they arrested eight men after Iraqi protesters threw two petrol bombs into the Iraqi embassy in the Hague late on Friday. One of the firebombs, hurled through a first floor window, exploded and started a fire which caused 10,000 guilders (\$5,300) of damage, police said. No one was in the building at the time. The attack followed a day of peaceful protests outside the embassy.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00	Cartoons
18:15	L'ecole de Fins
19:00	News in French
19:15	Histoire de l'art
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Mother and Son
21:10	All our Children
22:00	News in English
22:30	Parade

PRAYER TIMES

03:43	Fajr
09:04	Sunrise/Duha
11:36	Dhuhr
15:12	Asr
18:08	Maghreb
19:28	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich Tel. 816741

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

AMMAN:

Dr. Ahmad Al-Natour	653934
Dr. Bahja Badr	849362
Dr. Wa'el Dumani	774800
Dr. Mohammad Abu Ma'rouf	774111
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdous pharmacy	778336
Al Asma pharmacy	637055
Natrouk pharmacy	636762
Al Salan pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	649435
Shmeisat pharmacy	637660

IRBID:

Dr. Kamal Najjar	—
Al Sharras pharmacy	278225

ZARQA:

Dr. Youssef Awad	—
Khalil pharmacy	985417

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121

OVERSEAS CALLS

Central Amman Telephone	010230
Repairs	623101
Abdelli Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	771111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	—
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity J. Amn	642816
Aklich Maternity J. Amn	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallat, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, St. Michael	6641114
Shmeisat Hospital	669131

ZARQA:

University Hospital	845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital	6672779
The Islamic, Abdali	66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali	6641646
Ishtaiq, Al-Muhajjem	7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	77511126
Army, Marja	89161115
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)175555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272775
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital	(02)247100

MARKET PRICES

Upgrader price in flls per kg

Apple	850 / 750
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Banana	500 / 450
Beans (Makassar)	450 / 400
Cabbage	140 / 100
Carrot	180 / 120
Cauliflower	140 / 100
Cucumbers (large)	200 / 150
Cucumbers (small)	380 / 320
Eggplant	250 / 200
Garlic	500 / 400
Grapefruit	250 / 200
Lemon	300 / 250
Lettuce (per one)	150 / 100
Marrow (large)	200 / 150
Marrow (small)	400 / 350
Onion (dry)	300 / 250
Onion (green)	180 / 120
Orange	280 / 200
Pepper (hot)	720 / 650
Pepper (sweet)	240 / 180
Potato	240 / 190
Radish	200 / 150
Sage	400 / 300
Spinach	120 / 80
Tomatoes	400 / 320

Work to start soon on courts of justice complex

AMMAN (J.T.) — Work on the construction of a JD 10 million complex to house the courts of justice in Amman will soon begin, and the government has allocated JD 1 million for the initial stage of the project, according to Minister of Justice Majed Khalifeh.



Majed Khalifeh

In a statement to Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times dailies, the minister said that the complex would consist of seven storeys.

At present, the Court of Appeals, the First Instance Court, the Higher Court of Justice and the Court of Cassation as well as a court for the Amman Municipality are distributed around the capital. "The new complex is expected to house all these courts plus the Justice Ministry itself," the minister said.

"The Armed Forces donated a 28 dunam land near the Parliament building, in Abdali, for the project and the government is expected to come up with the cost of the whole project, which is expected to be completed in four years from now," Mr. Khalifeh said.

The aim of the project, he said, is to dispose of the old and inconvenient courts and facilitate the access to the courts by judges and members of the public, the minister said.

"At present, the Justice Ministry is putting the finishing touches to the project, which is planned as a most modern building, with

all the required facilities like courtrooms, waiting rooms for the public, lawyers' halls, assembly and meeting halls," the minister pointed out.

The foundation stone to the complex is expected to be laid in three months' time and the total area of the buildings is expected to be 50,000 square metres, the minister added.

When first planned in 1989, the complex was estimated to cost JD 6 million, but due to the difficult economic conditions in Jordan at the time the project was put off.

The then justice minister, who announced the project at a press conference, said that the complex was urgently needed to replace the congested and old-fashioned buildings that currently serve as courts in Amman.

Fertiliser company makes use of local raw materials, says could boost production

AMMAN (J.T.) — In view of the loss of Gulf countries markets for Jordanian products, a major fertiliser company in Jordan is turning attention to European markets to sell its products and ensure further income for the country.

Hani Hneidi, director general of the Jordan Kuwait Company for Agriculture and Food Products, said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the company, which was established in 1985, was currently using locally produced potash and phosphate for most of its products.

"The company established a fertiliser plant in Aqaba in 1988 in order to meet the Jordanian markets' demands and others

abroad," Mr. Hneidi said.

The JD 1 million plant produces 40,000 tonnes of fertilisers annually but the capacity could be boosted to 55,000 tonnes should there be need for more production for exports, according to Mr. Hneidi.

The Aqaba plant has been marketing its products mainly in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, until before the Gulf crisis, but contacts are now under way with France and the Netherlands to market the products in Europe.

"Already the company has sent shipments of agricultural products and fertilisers to German markets and it is hoped that the contacts with the other European countries will open the way for

further shipments to Europe," Mr. Hneidi said.

"The company, which operates with a JD 4 million capital, uses nearly 80 per cent of the phosphate and potash for the fertiliser industry from Jordan and the high quality product makes it attractive to Europe and highly competitive in other countries," said Mr. Hneidi.

"By meeting the local markets' demand, the company has saved the Kingdom \$5 million worth of fertilisers annually," he added.

At present, Mr. Hneidi pointed out, the plant in Aqaba employs 54 technicians and workers, but the number could grow into 80 once the increase in exports has been guaranteed.

Housing Bank nets profits, starts distributing dividends

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Housing Bank has just announced that its net profits for 1990 amounted to JD 3.67 million, and it will soon distribute dividends to the shareholders at the rate of 14 per cent.

"Despite the Gulf crisis in the second half of 1990, which has had its adverse effects on the national economy, the Housing Bank succeeded in maintaining its normal growth rate and its total assets now stand at JD 607.2 million," according to Zuhair Khouri, chairman and director general of the Housing Bank.

Mr. Khouri told a general assembly meeting at the Plaza Hotel in Amman that many people in Jordan resorted to drawing large sums of their savings during the Gulf crisis, only to return them soon afterwards when their

fears were allayed. "Indeed deposits of clients rose in 1990 by JD 53.9 million to reach JD 487.9 million," Mr. Khouri said.

The Housing Bank's annual report shows that loans extended for housing and development projects in 1990 amounted to JD 118.9 million and, despite the Gulf crisis, investments in the country continued prompting the bank to expand its operations.

"The Housing Bank has introduced a new credit programme for projects that require expansion or modernisation and has been offering loans to the investors," Mr. Khouri said.

He added that 1990 had witnessed the opening of four new branches of the Housing Bank in various regions, to raise the total number of branches in the coun-

try to 100 or 50 per cent of the total number of the banks operating in the country.

"1990 also witnessed the start of children's bank, affiliated to the Housing Bank, to encourage children to save up for their future," Mr. Khouri said.

He said that Her Majesty Queen Noor laid the cornerstone for this bank which is located within the Haya Arts Centre in Amman.

In order to improve the Housing Bank's performance, Mr. Khouri said, arrangement was made in the past year for 1,200 Housing Bank employees to get advanced training courses and the Amman branch offered training in banking to other banking institutions operating in the Kingdom.

Relief supplies for Iraq flow steadily in

AMMAN (J.T.) — Medecins sans frontiers (MSF) office here has announced plans to alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people, especially in the Basra Governorate, and said that it was cooperating with other relief organisations to provide assistance.

A MSF statement said that trucks laden with relief supplies by the European Community (EC) left Amman Saturday for Iraq. The trucks carry 26 tonnes of medical materials, water, sanitation equipment, high energy biscuits, milk powder and fuel, the statement said.

"Basra Governorate is the main focus of MSF's activities at the moment and technical assistance is given to health centres in Al Zubair, Al Qurna and Al Medina districts," the statement pointed out.

"These centres will be supplied with primary health care needs, drugs, milk for children, fuel and means to secure a clean water supply," the statement added.

"In each district mother and child care activities will be established at a health centre," the statement added.

"MSF will continue to give material support and technical assistance to health centres in Ramadi Governorate and material has already been donated to facilities in Ramadi, Fallujah and Hit towns," said the statement.

It said that the MSF was in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society branches in the northern regions of Iraq in order to provide medical assistance to the civilian population,

In another development, a team representing the Federation of Jordanian Miners Union returned to Amman Saturday following a several day visit to Iraq where it carried shipments of food and children milk as well as a power generator.

Khaled Shrim, head of the group, said that his team had met with trade unionists and other officials and expressed readiness to contribute towards the reconstruction of Iraq.

Iraq's needs and assistance that can be channelled from the Miners Union in Jordan were discussed at the meetings, Mr. Shrim said.

He said that agreement was reached to send to Iraq several repair and maintenance teams and technicians to contribute to the re-construction process.

Meanwhile, according to Reuters News Agency, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sent a convoy of fuel and medicine to Iraq on Saturday as part of an effort to deliver relief supplies to areas outside Baghdad.

The ICRC said the convoy, its 13th from Jordan, included 10 water tankers and two fuel trucks carrying 23 tonnes of diesel and gasoline.

An ICRC spokesman said some of the supplies would be sent from Baghdad to the south while relief agencies are also trying to deliver food and medicine to northern Iraq.

Western doctors who were in Iraq last week said hospitals outside Baghdad had run out of basic medicines.

Jordan to observe World Non-Smoking Day

AMMAN (J.T.) — A national seminar on combating smoking will be held in Amman on May 29, under the chairmanship of Minister of Health Adnan Jalouli and with the participation of various organisations, according to an announcement here Wednesday by a preparatory committee.

The committee discussed arrangements for the seminar, which, it said, will be held to mark Jordan's observance of the World Non-Smoking Day on May 31.

"The non-smoking day would be observed in Jordan under the motto: Towards creating public places and public transport free of smoking," the committee said in a statement.

It said that the observance of the world day would be marked by lectures, seminars and notices in the media warning against the hazards of smoking.

Jordan has been observing the non-smoking day over the past years and the Ministry of Health has enforced laws banning smoking in public places, hospitals, clubs, means of transport and other areas.

The national committee, which was established in 1988, has set up branches in Amman, Irbid and Karak with the aim of providing advice to the young against the habit of smoking.

On May 31, the committee plans to distribute booklets, raise posters and show documentary films focusing attention on the general dangers involved in smoking.

The committee is made up of representatives of the ministries of health and awqaf and Islamic affairs as well as the Jordanian medical and pharmacists associations, the Civil Defence Department, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the General Federation of Jordanian Women, the General Union of Voluntary Societies, the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund, the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents and the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Mr. Shabaan said that thanks to the engineering units of the Armed Forces, and those of the Ministry of Public Works, the roads into and around the ancient sites could be reopened in two weeks from now.

Several people were killed and heavy property damage was caused in the storm on March 22. Most of the bridges on roads, vast areas of farmlands, irrigation canals and culverts, and thousands of heads of farm animals were swept away by the floods.

The Council of Ministers, which received a comprehensive report about the situation from Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdol Raouf Al Rawabdeh, allocated JD 1 million for the repairs in the governorates of Tafleeh, Karak and Maan, the worst affected regions of the south.

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Financial donations to help the needy

Japanese group briefed on expatriates' needs

AMMAN (J.T.) — A six-member Japanese group representing the Gulf Evacuees Relief Executive Committee was Saturday briefed on Jordan's services to the evacuees from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world during the Gulf crisis and the urgent pressing needs of expatriates returning to live in the Kingdom.

The briefing was presented by Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, at a meeting with the group members who came to Jordan last week to learn about and explore means of extending assistance to the needy people.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the group had raised a large sum of money in donations from the Japanese people to be channelled to the Jordanian government and people to help them offset part of the losses inflicted on the Kingdom by the Gulf war.

Dr. Qatanani presented to the visitors a general review of the living conditions of people with special focus on the Palestinians in the refugee camps.

He said that the Palestinians here and in the occupied West Bank were living in very difficult conditions, brought about by the Gulf war.

He said the loss of remittances sent by relatives in Kuwait and other Gulf states had dealt a heavy blow to Palestinian dependence on them for their living.

Dr. Qatanani also briefed the visitors on the department's activities and its contacts with the regional and international organisations with the aim of providing help to the needy Palestinians.

Following the outbreak of the Gulf crisis in August 1990, at least 200,000 Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates have returned to Jordan and Palestine after losing their livelihoods in the Gulf together with their savings and other property, official sources say.

At least four of the Japanese group will go to the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip Sunday for a few days visit to investigate the situation in the Palestinian areas and refugee camps before returning to Amman for further discussions with Jordanian officials.

Cement factory makes JD 4m profit

By Mamdouh Hawamdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Cement Factories Company has achieved a net profit of JD 3,976,431 during the year 1990, according to the company's Director General Hatem Halawani.

Mr. Halawani said the year 1990 was distinguished by the reoperation of all the company's production lines as the company was exporting cement to new foreign markets. This, he said, led to an increase in production and a reduction in costs.

Mr. Halawani said 1,499,100 tonnes of cement were sold in the local market last year, while 241,951 tonnes were exported for foreign markets.

The foreign markets importing Jordanian cement, according to Mr. Halawani, are Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Dubai.

The company's plan for the current year aims at continuing operating all its production lines at Al Fuhais and Al Rashidiyeh factories, to meet the need of the local market, and to export the surplus, which is estimated at about 1.75 million tonnes, the company's director general said.

He added that the company's plan for the current year entailed bringing about improvements at one of Aqaba port's piers to increase the volume of the company's exports, and to continue the production process during winter in Al Rashidiyeh factory.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

University plans disarmament studies

AMMAN (Petra) — Yarmonk University President Ali Mahfadh has been elected as member of a committee set up by the International Association of Universities to promote university teaching of topics related to disarmament. The committee, which groups presidents of universities and scientists as well as diplomats and experts in monitoring arms sales, will try to work out special courses for university training in disarmament and relevant matters.

Arabian Horse Club announces winners

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arabian Horse Club announced Saturday that the fourth round of showjumping competitions would be held at the club on April 26. Last Thursday, the club held a substitute round of showjumping competitions and said that the cumulative results of the past three rounds, up to March 31, 1991 were as follows: First winner, Hani Bisharat, second winner, Raed Nasser, third winner, Saeed Al Shueibi, fourth winner, Yazid Abu Jaber, fifth winner, Omar Bibi, sixth winner, Muna Sukhtan, seventh winner, Lubna Izziddien.

Exhibition to benefit Palestinians

IRBID (Petra) — An exhibition on Palestinian cultural heritage was opened in Irbid Saturday. The exhibition, which was organised by Palestinian women groups, was opened by Mayor Abdul Razzak Tubeishat. It displays paintings and other handicrafts depicting Palestinian culture. The organisers said that proceeds of the three-day exhibition would benefit the Palestinian people involved in the intifada.

Officials, farmers discuss water situation

AMMAN (J.T.) — A meeting was held Saturday at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation under the chairmanship of Water and Irrigation Minister Saad Hayel Surour and in the presence of the members of the Agriculture Committee of the Lower House of parliament and the Farmers Association and Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) secretary general Abdul Aziz Wishah.

The meeting discussed the water situation in the Jordan Valley region, the available water resources and the water needed for irrigation from April to October, 1991.

Mr. Surour said the water situation was not as good as the past years because the rainfall in this season was late and irregular. This, the minister said, caused a significant shortage of water in

reservoirs because of consumption from the Kingdom's reserves during the rainy season.

Despite the fact that there is shortage in water, the ministry will seek to provide all farmers with water in quantities similar to previous years, he said.

The minister affirmed the need to draw a long-period water strategy so as to prepare the country for any water shortage in the future.

Mr. Surour said that the ministry was facing difficulty in conducting periodical maintenance work for irrigation water network in the Jordan Valley region because spare parts were not available in Jordan.

Mr. Wishah reviewed the authority's water policy for the coming period and the problem facing the JVA.

Search for 'non-Palestinian' Palestinians is an exercise in futility, says human rights activist Kuttah

From Rania Atalla
in Washington

ONGOING EFFORTS by the U.S., Israel and some Arab states to find a new Palestinian leadership as an alternative to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are bound to backfire and to prove counterproductive, according to a prominent Palestinian lawyer.

Jonathan Kuttah, co-founder of "Al-Haq," the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, believes most Palestinians regard efforts at supplanting the PLO as an attempt not only to sideline the Palestinian leadership but also to sidestep the Palestinians as a people.

"The search for 'non-Palestinian' Palestinians is an empty exercise to avoid dealing with the Palestinian people," Mr. Kuttah told a group of academics and journalists Friday at the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine, a recently established Washington think-tank.

war, from house demolitions to administrative detentions and expulsions of Palestinians.

In the context of the "peace process," these measures translate into a contradiction of what Washington has referred to as "confidence building measures" that are aimed at creating a proper climate for talks between Arab countries and Israel and Palestinians and Israel.

Mr. Kuttah said Palestinians were made to understand that although the U.S. was not willing to push Israel towards an overall peace settlement, it was ready to pressure Israeli authorities on these "confidence-building measures" aimed at improving daily life for Palestinians in the territories. "What we have seen on the ground is measures that destroy the confidence of the Palestinian people," Mr. Kuttah said, citing as examples prolonged curfews as a form of controlling the Palestinian population, controls on Palestinians working inside Israel, limiting Palestinian access to East Jerusalem and expulsions of Palestinians of moderate views such as Israel's latest move to deport four Fatah supporters from the territories.

Meanwhile, politically, the Likud government has put forth its demands for the normalisation of relations between Israel and Arab states, and for an end to the Arab boycott of Israel.

Palestinians in the territories are convinced that "Israel does not want to meet with any Palestinians," Mr. Kuttah asserts.

Newsreports have quoted Secretary of State James Baker as saying that a goal of the Israeli-proposed/ backed regional conference is to bring Israel and Arab states into direct talks while also providing a "mechanism" for Israel and the Palestinians to start a dialogue. But some believe that such a conference, in line with Washington's two-track approach to settling the conflict, is a sensible-sounding formula to sign peace agreements between Arab states and Israel while getting no more than "talks" between the Palestinians and Israel.

Palestinians have made it clear they are firm on the principles — self-determination and Palestinian representation — but ready and willing to be flexible on the

means of achieving those principles. "If the ultimate objectives are guarantees, we are willing to talk about mechanisms and phases," said one Washington-based Palestinian academic who did not wish to be quoted by name.

Mr. Kuttah reiterated that same principle: Palestinians are willing to be flexible on the details and the form in which negotiations will take place provided there are guarantees for the Palestinians to represent themselves rather than have another party represent them.

This flexibility, according to Mr. Kuttah, stems from the fact that Palestinians have felt it is important that they not be placed in a position where they may appear to be the obstacles to peace.

Nonetheless, Mr. Kuttah said any concession from the Palestinians would have to be made by the "totality of the Palestinian people," as represented through the Palestine National Council (PNC), the PLO and its chairperson, Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Arafat, he added, is the one Palestinian leader who is able to pull together the dif-

ferent factions of the organisation, from left to right, from religious to Marxists. "He has the personal popularity and standing that can get intellectuals and shabab (youth) in refugee camps... and in that sense he is essential," Mr. Kuttah said.

Asked what would be the outcome if the Palestinians who have met with Mr. Baker during his two trips to the region would declare they have no relation with the PLO or have not been approved by the PLO, Mr. Kuttah said: "Whatever legitimacy they have would evaporate overnight."

Mr. Kuttah acknowledges that the Palestinian leadership should have made a greater effort to explain its position on the Gulf crisis and the nuances of that position, rather than allow the image and perception to prevail that the leadership was supportive of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

The Palestinian lawyer believes many Palestinians are convinced that U.S. interest would be better served in the region if Israel is brought into accommodation with Palestinian nationalism.

Although Washington has declared it is serious about peace and willing to work on it, the U.S. actions have contrasted with its intentions as more U.S. dollars are given to Israel while the latter increases the settlements in the West Bank and departs more Palestinians.

"We want to believe that the U.S. is willing to act on its own words," he said.

Palestinians have become the barometer of President Bush's New World Order, Mr. Kuttah said. "If this New World Order treats us justly and fairly and is willing to apply standards consistently, then maybe there is hope in this order for everyone. If, on the other hand, it ignores us, crushes us and sidelines us, not only will we suffer but the New World Order is unlikely to be very stable in the long run," he said.

He ended with some irony in his thought: "We understand that (President) Bush has been struck by Amnesty International's reports on (Iraqi-occupied) Kuwait. We hope he is reading other Amnesty International reports."

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Imbalance between population and resources: Mother of all problems

What is the single most crucial economic problem in Jordan? And what are your projections for the Jordanian economy in the coming twelve months? These were two sharp questions thrown at six Jordanian economists by the weekly economic programme which will be presented by Jordan Television next Sunday, April 21.

In my opinion, the mother of all economic problems that face Jordan is the imbalance between population and resources. Over three million live now in Jordan, 10 times the population of 45 years ago. We are growing at probably the highest rate in the world, around 4 per cent per annum. To make things worse the Jordanian population increased by 10 per cent since the eruption of the Gulf crisis, owing to the return of around 250,000 Jordanian expatriates from Kuwait and other Gulf states together with their families.

At the same time the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by at least 10 per cent. Thus the standard of living continued its decline, which started since 1982, and accelerated after the crisis of 1988. Per capita income is currently around half of what it used to be eight years ago in real terms.

Under these difficult circumstances, we can identify other

subordinated social and economic problems that stem from the imbalance between population and resources. Such problems include: high unemployment (around 24 per cent), the near absence of new investments, the failure after initial optimism to find oil on a commercial scale, or for that matter any mineral resources except for phosphate and potash, the insufficiency of cultivable land, the dangerous shortage of water for agricultural, industrial and civil purposes, the low industrial production capacity, the chronic financial deficit, the imbalance between imports and exports, the scarcity of foreign exchange, the mushrooming of foreign and domestic indebtedness, the heavy migration, the lack of family planning and the spread of poverty.

As far as short term projections are concerned, we are on the optimistic side. There are solid indicators to confirm this optimism, such as: the sharp rise in share prices following the end of Gulf War II, the foreign aid flowing to Jordan from Japan and Europe, which covered the deficit in the regular budget and partially activated the extraordinary budget, the stability of the Jordanian dinar in the free market, where the exchange rate is almost the same as the official rate, and the increase of demand on land and houses which has spurred the real estate market.

These indicators justify an optimistic view of the Jordanian economy in the short term. They show that the worst is over and behind us. The expected removal of economic sanctions against Iraq will help the Jordanian economy to recover in a big way.

The dark side of things is of course the negative position adopted by the Arab Gulf states towards Jordan. This attitude may not last long. Those states will realise, sooner or later, that it is in their own best interest to keep Jordan healthy and sound, economically and politically, because Jordan serves as a buffer zone between the Israeli war machine and the Arab oil wells.

When the dust settles and the emotions calm down, all concerned will hopefully come back to their senses, especially when they realise that Jordan had not committed any crime against Kuwait or any other Gulf state in order to deserve punishment and ostracism. If history were to be rolled back again, the Jordanian official and popular stance towards the war would probably not change an iota. We had been against the war for the sake of both Iraq and Kuwait. A peaceful Arab solution, which was at hand, would have saved both Arab countries from the incredible devastation they have suffered needlessly, we think.

Operation storm and dust?

WE ARE hearing a lot these days from Washington about the American seriousness in efforts for Middle East based on equitable solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem. And, having seen President George Bush dispatching his Secretary of State James Baker to the Middle East twice following the Gulf war for talks with regional leaders, we could perhaps also discern some seriousness on the part of Washington.

But the headline statements coming out of Israel, particularly the reaffirmation by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his hawkish Housing Minister Ariel Sharon that the Israeli government is stepping up its policy of building settlements in the occupied territories, pose a big question: How serious are the Americans in their endeavours to settle the Palestinian problem once and for all based on justice and fairness?

Adding a little more scepticism is the marked abstention by American administration officials from even describing the settlements as illegal rather than "obstacles to peace."

What are we to learn from the situation? That the Americans are serious, but the Israelis are not when it comes to moves for a comprehensive solution to the entire Middle East conflict? Or that the American seriousness falls short of calling a spade by its right name?

The Israeli position that it would not allow itself to be dissuaded from increasing settlements in the occupied territories defeats the purpose of ongoing peace efforts, especially when considering that it was reiterated by Shamir and Sharon Saturday amid Mr. Baker's intense diplomacy to solve the conflict. Shamir's assertion that Israel's settlement policy has no relation to the peace process exposes the reality that the Jewish state is somehow hoping for a solution which does not entail the return of Palestinian territory. The argument gains more currency when we also listen to Israeli leaders repeating, time and again, that any peace agreement with Syria will not result in the Jewish state relinquishing the Golan Heights. All pointers are to the fact that what Israel wants or hopes for is "peace in return for peace" rather than "peace in return for land." That raises the biggest question ever: What is the purpose in everyone concerned running around in circles seeking the elusive peace when it is apparent that the occupier has no intention whatsoever of returning land to its rightful owners as part of a settlement?

Mr. Baker and others in the Bush administration — if indeed they are interested in genuine peace rather than raising a storm and dust to vilify the war against Iraq in the name of international legitimacy — would be better advised if they turn their energies to convincing Israel that there will never be peace in the Middle East unless and until the occupied lands are returned to their rightful owners. The Arabs are ready for honourable peace but not surrender of their inalienable rights for the sake of peace simply because Israel wants it so.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Commenting on James Baker's current contacts with Arab countries to peddle his initiative, Al Ra'i Arabic daily said Saturday that the U.S. Secretary is adopting a policy quite different from that which Washington followed in solving the Gulf crisis. The paper said that Baker's moves revolve around Israel's interests, and is aimed at obtaining further concessions from the Arabs for a settlement favourable to Israel and Zionism. Clearly the United States is dealing with the Middle East question in a different manner to that adopted by the U.S.-led alliance in the Gulf crisis where Washington refused any form of negotiations with Iraq and banned such negotiations for others too, the paper noted. It said that Washington is trying to find a way around Security Council Resolution 242 which gives the Palestinians their rights instead of trying to implement that resolution. What is more, the United States is holding the Arabs as the aggressors with respect to Israel and is imposing impossible conditions at a time when Israel continues to defy all Council resolutions and refuses to withdraw from Arab land, the paper pointed out. Israel has in advance voiced its total rejection of Security Council resolutions, but it is being rewarded not punished for its attitude, said the paper. If Washington wants to avoid double standard dealings, it should force Israel to give back the land it has occupied since 1967 and allow the Palestinians to exercise their rights in full, the paper demanded. Until then, it said, Washington will remain as far as ever from any step towards achieving genuine peace.

The Labour Ministry's endeavours to find jobs for the unemployed is tackled by a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. Na'ali calls the public attention to the fact that the ministry has embarked on serious efforts towards substituting the non-Jordanians with local workers and the ministry's latest announcement that it found 1,500 jobs for workers mainly in the Amman region. These jobs are found in hotels, restaurants and construction projects, and they should indeed attract thousands of young men who have been seeking jobs for so long to no avail, the writer notes. In its drive to solve many of the economic and social problems in Jordan, the Labour Ministry deserves all appreciation and support from the members of the public; and the best way of displaying such gratitude is to encourage, pave the way and act towards involving job-seekers in all fields of occupation, the writer argues. Indeed the job-seekers would be doing their country and themselves a big favour if they turned their attention to the offered jobs; and, says the writer, it is a thousand times better to be working than being idle and shunning a decent way of life.



When the full story of the Gulf war and its tragic Kurdish aftermath is revealed, the extraordinary role of Turkey's President Turgut Ozal may give connoisseurs of diplomacy some interesting material to chew over.

Back in August, within days of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, Ozal was portraying the crisis to his compatriots as an "historic opportunity" which they must not miss. Opportunity for what? To build a stable order in the Middle East — but more specifically, in Ozal's mind, to establish for Turkey a predominant role in the region. Turkey's destiny, Ozal tells every visiting journalist, is to become the Japan of the Middle East. He is as big in ideas as he is diminutive in stature.

Delusions of grandeur, snort his critics — and they usually add that when Ozal talks about Turkey he really means himself. But the man is determined to maximise Turkey's role in the world

and has skillfully succeeded in convincing right-wing Americans that he's Uncle Sam's anchorman. Never coy about underestimating his own influence, Ozal was claiming (privately) a few weeks ago that President Bush's fateful decision to liberate Kuwait was in response to "recommendations" from Ankara. (To think we were all given to believe that the decisive influence last August was Mrs. Thatcher).

There was nothing in Ozal's humble origins to suggest that he would rise to such dizzy heights. He was born 63 years ago in the eastern Anatolian city of Malatya; his father was a relatively lowly government official, his mother a primary school teacher; one of his grandfathers, he let it be known, was of Kurdish extraction — a poignant point in the context of the present tragedy. Malatya's second most famous son is Mehmet Ali Agca, the young fanatic who tried to assassinate the Pope in 1981.

The youthful Turgut took a degree in electrical engineering at Istanbul Technical University, and later studied in the United States, the start of his American connection. During this period he became fascinated by economics; today it is almost an obsession. He was once reported, rightly or wrongly, as saying that "the most important thing in politics is money." Cynics suggest, perhaps unfairly, that this maxim encapsulates all he possesses in the way of a political credo.

After a succession of influential jobs in both the public and private sectors, Ozal entered politics in the 1970s in the oddest fashion. He became a candidate for the main Islamic fundamentalist organisation, the National Salvation Party. Perhaps the luckiest break in his life occurred when he failed to get elected to parliament. One of the first actions of the generals who seized power in 1980 was to proscribe the NSP and ban all its members from engaging in politics. If Ozal had been elected, his political career would probably have been finished. Instead, to general astonishment, the generals made him deputy prime minister, with responsibility for economic affairs.

Though his personal relations with the military chiefs were never easy, he held this post until 1982, when he quit the cabinet to start organising his own political organisation, the Motherland Party. He was given little chance, but in 1983 he pulled off a spectacular victory at the polls. The party has remained in power ever since; it is totally Ozal's creation.

His record over the past eight years (first as prime minister and since 1989 as president) has been patchwork of contradictions, with failures in areas where he was expected to do well and vice versa. Things have gone badly for him on the domestic front, while in international affairs — about which he seemed almost clueless 10 years ago — he has shown ingenuity, decisiveness and imagination. In the process, there have been U-turns which have provoked charges of opportunism from his opponents.

In 1987 it was Ozal — the one-time supporter of Islamic traditionalism — who decided that Turkey should apply for membership of the European Community. In his conversion to Europe he disregarded the obstacles in Turkey's past, not least the thorny question of its human rights record, and he foolishly encouraged his compatriots to equate the mere act of application with automatic full membership. Nevertheless, Ozal's decision marked a milestone in Turkey's history.

A year later Ozal attempted to stage a reconciliation with the Greeks at a slightly theatrical summit meeting with his Greek opposite number Andreas Papandreu at Davos in Switzerland. Sadly, the Davos process petered out, largely because of domestic distractions in Greece, but Ozal won plaudits for trying to establish friendly relations with Athens. Ozal has also shown greater interest in solving the Cyprus problem than any previous Turkish leader has done; the stumbling block, on the Turkish side, is the hardline Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, who fears that one day Ozal will do a deal with the Greeks over his head.

But for the ordinary Turk what matters is not Turkish posturing on the world stage but what's happening in his own backyard. Ozal's much-vaunted economic programme has failed to turn the country into the El Dorado that he promised. True, there have been tremendous infrastructural achievements, but prices soar month after month and there is scepticism in business circles that

inflation will ever be brought under control.

More ominously, resentment is seething, especially among the intelligentsia, over Ozal's autocratic style. All major decisions are made within the bosom of his family, often in the small hours of the morning. The popular jibe is that Ozal has revived the Ottoman sultanate, in modern dress; a more accurate description is that he views the republic of Turkey as a family business, with himself as chairman and his relatives as members of the board. The most controversial of the family is his wife Semra, an enterprising lady with a penchant for whisky and cigars. She now seems determined to enter politics in her own right, after years of campaigning for women's interests, a delicate cause in a predominantly Muslim country. Last month a furious row erupted over her bid to secure the leadership of the important Istanbul branch of the Motherland Party. For once she was thwarted, temporarily, but only after a free fight broke out in the conference hall.

Ozal may attempt to change the constitution to give Turkey a presidential system roughly on the American model. Obviously

ly the procedure was correct, for the head of state is elected by parliament not by the nation. The national assembly, in which Ozal's Motherland Party had a huge majority, rubber-stamped his candidacy. But all the opinion polls, coupled with local election results, showed that the party had lost the support of the nation. Ever since then the opposition parties have protested that Ozal's elevation was a "travesty of true democracy." As head of state, Ozal continues to run the country and the party in blithe disregard of constitutional restrictions on his powers. His successor as prime minister, Yildirim Akbulut, is widely regarded as a non-entity.

Almost from the start of the Gulf crisis Ozal aligned Turkey unreservedly with Washington. Other leaders would probably have tried to sit on the fence, the time-honoured Turkish posture in times of international conflict.

This weekend, however, the Kurdish holocaust obliterates all the petty rivalry in Ankara over Ozal's constitutional powers. His grandiose scenario about Turkey's "historic opportunity" to play a major role in the Middle East now looks "suspiciously threadbare." Yet, to his credit, Ozal has shown himself more realistic than his political rivals about the role of the Kurds and markedly more perceptive than President Bush.

Initially, Ozal feared that the U.S. might back the Kurds. American officials assured him the U.S. would not even contact the Kurdish opposition within Iraq. That suggests that Turkey bears some responsibility for the mess that Bush has got himself into. But as the crisis evolved Ozal himself, in a typical U-turn, decided to contact the Kurdish leaders, who secretly visited Ankara a few weeks ago — something unimaginable at the start of the Gulf saga. For all his shortcomings, Ozal is at heart a human pragmatist.

What happens next. God only knows. But the pundits say that the Almighty Himself can never divine what Turgut Ozal will do next. — The Observer.

He views the republic as a family business, with himself as chairman and his relatives as members of the board.

LETTERS

Jordan's role in Gulf crisis was 'right'

To the editor:

I write as a German who has lived for almost a decade, now in Jordan. Living in a Jordanian neighbourhood and sharing the daily life routine of the Jordanians I dare say that I have got some insight into the "problems, attitudes, cultures, and beliefs" of the Jordanian people. Maybe I do not understand it all, still I keep trying. And where understanding fails, respect surely helps.

Mr. Roy Coughlin (Letters, Jordan Times, March 29-30, 1991) admits frankly that Americans do not understand the problems of the Middle East. Yet it seems, as an American, he has to judge, disapprove of, and argue with things and facts he does not understand.

And I wonder where he got his profound information from about what was happening in Jordan during the Gulf war. I was out here in Jordan and I cannot say I know anybody who supported Saddam Hussein as a person (as he put it and whatever that might mean or imply).

There is an old Arab saying: "With my brother against my cousin, with my cousin against my neighbour, and with my neighbour against the rest of the world."

And this was what one could clearly feel in the streets of Jordan at the time. Nobody here supported Saddam Hussein for invading Kuwait or what else he might have done. As a matter of fact public opinion seemed rather against that, for obvious reasons, I would say. But with the interference of foreign forces the matter changed and traditional loyalties became stronger. When Mr. Coughlin's "good" president fighting "evil" Saddam selected the people of Iraq for starvation although he had no quarrel with them, as he himself stated repeatedly, traditional Arab thinking took over. The people of Iraq are after all brothers and neighbours. They therefore deserved full support. Right or wrong seemed of even less importance once the American inflicted good started to barbecue Iraqi civilians, women and children. I agree with Mr. Coughlin that all human beings know the difference between good and evil. But sometimes it seems somehow difficult to understand this difference. For example: if Iraqis kill Iraqis it is evil, on the other hand if Americans kill Iraqis it is good. And further more good can change into evil and vice-versa: Egyptians killing Egyptians was evil, the Camp

David-Agreement seems to have changed that; so now it is good. And Syrians killing Syrians was evil, the Gulf war changed that too.

So I think as long as the fact is not made clear that people killing people is evil, no matter who does the killing and for whatever reason, there will always be the possibility of confusion.

Nevertheless it seems to me that the Jordanians do know the difference between good and evil. They understand quite well that there are good bombs and evil bombs, good missiles and evil missiles, good warheads and evil warheads... and they know for sure that peace is good — that is why they became a pain in the world's neck by never stopping to call for peace — while the good U.S. pushed good soldiers and good destructive weapons to the Gulf to make just that impossible: Peace. And they know from experience that war is evil — that is why they did not want this war to happen in the first place, but that did not do them much good. Did it?

On the hero-issue I don't quite agree with Mr. Coughlin. I do not believe that the Palestinians and the Arabs need a hero. I rather believe that the Palestinians need a homeland (a state I mean), and that the Arabs need justice and peace. Because that is what they themselves say they want and need, and they should know best, should not they? The hero you think they might need, well, I believe they have found him already, and they even know they have. And he is quite a guy, the greatest hero any people can possibly get even in better times than these. He "cares more for people than for power, more for the dignity of his followers than for self-aggrandisement, and more for the well-being of all in the Middle East than for that of his followers at the cost of all." He has great experience, patience, and wisdom, and last but not least, he has excellent manners and language, which seems to be rare these days.

(For those who can't guess: I'm talking about His Majesty King Hussein).

If Mr. Coughlin himself could find a hero with those qualities among his fellow-Americans and if he could succeed in making his fellow-Americans accept this man as their hero instead of Rambo, his "new world order" could at last become more than a frightening word.

But what really puzzles me is the last sentence in Mr.

Coughlin's letter: "Some of us still wish the Jordanians well..."

Despite of that, one might ask: What did those Jordanians do? Let's recall it. Before Aug. 2, they wanted to solve the border dispute between Iraq and Kuwait through negotiations. (They probably did not know about different U.S.-arrangements). After Aug. 2, they wanted to find an Arab solution to an Arab problem. They wanted to avoid foreign intervention to stop further tension in the area. They denounced acquisition of territory by force. They denounced the military build-up in the Gulf. They complied with the U.N. sanctions. They denounced war and called for peace. They took care of a great deal of human misery caused by America's "good" war. And for months they tried to talk truth and reason to power.

So, despite of all that Mr. Coughlin still wished the Jordanians well. I guess they really should be grateful for that, and should appreciate not to be treated worse for pleading in times of a good war for evil peace. Maybe as time goes by the Jordanians will come around. But on the other hand, they probably will not.

As far as I have come to know the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan they are a very proud people with a long tradition in fighting for the principles of peace, justice, and freedom for all. And they always try to be what they are: free Arabs and free to choose their own way of life in accordance with the above principles and in harmony with their beliefs and traditions which are formed by many centuries and by the greatest civilisations in history.

Maybe a young nation like the USA cannot understand that. But the least Americans could do is to respect it. Because respect is what makes relationships work. Narrow-mindedness, arrogance, hypocrisy, intolerance, humiliation, intimidation, and pressure do not. I think Mr. Coughlin agrees.

I too do wish the Jordanian people well — because of what they did, for what they did, did not harm anyone and most important, it did not kill people. And not killing people is not evil, it is good — at least where I come from.

Elinor Kaiser-Mohammad,
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Perhaps peace is here to stay

By Peter Smerdon
Reuter

BEIRUT. — Lebanon's civil war is over. At least that is what government officials and diplomats increasingly believe following the years of slaughter and terror which began 16 years ago on Saturday.

"The language of the gun has been replaced by the language of dialogue and political and ideological argument," said Posts and Communications Minister George Saadeh, a Maronite Christian.

It is impossible to know exactly how many people were killed in the war before the guns fell silent last December. Official estimates range from 70,000 to 150,000.

Dreams of lasting peace have stirred before during lulls of six months or more only to be shattered by more fighting. But officials and diplomats see a major change in Lebanon's position from the days when power came from the barrel of a gun.

The Lebanese government has given the country's heavily-armed militias until the end of April to disarm or face being forcibly neutralised by the army and its allies.

None of the militias can match the Lebanese army backed by Syria's tanks and jets. Diplomats and officials believe the private armies will cooperate with the government order without a shot being fired.

"Lebanese are now convinced there should be no authority but the state, no gun but that held by legitimacy and no conflict other than merely political and ideological conflict," said Saadeh.

Syria's air strike and tank-led assault on the presidential palace to oust rebel Christian General Michel Aoun on Oct. 13 last year was the watershed in the civil war.

For the first time since Syrian troops came to Lebanon in 1976, airspace controlled by Israel was open to Damascus

to tip the balance of power in favour of a Syrian-backed Lebanese government.

This cleared the main block to gradual implementation of an Arab-sponsored peace plan known as the Taif Pact, which aims to tackle root causes of the war.

"I believe the war is over once and for all," said a senior Western diplomat. He asked not to be named because he said he wanted to avoid ruining his excellent record if he was wrong.

"The Lebanese have finally received what they let themselves in for when they invited Syria to send its troops here in 1976 — a par Syria. Now it is here, it is probably here to stay."

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Syrian peace is represented by the 40,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, strong backing from Damascus for the Taif Pact and official emphasis of a "special relationship" with its eastern neighbour.

The officials and diplomats said hurdles to total peace between Lebanese factions remained and conflict between Israeli troops and guerrillas in South Lebanon would continue.

Two car bombs last month killed 12 people and wounded 65 in the first such bombings since Lebanese troops took control of a militia-free Beirut and united the shattered city last December.

But asked if they thought that large civil war battles and the division of Beirut into warring Muslim and Christian sectors were now past, several Western diplomats said they believed so.

"Some politicians and military men outside the government ask me to work against the enormous Syrian political and military influence," said a Western envoy, who declined to be named.

"It is embarrassing because I can't and won't," he said. "To put it bluntly, the West would rather deal through Syria with a Lebanon at peace than have Lebanon at war and no one to deal with."

Government ministers from Lebanon's main Sunni Muslim and Maronite sects told Reuters that they were confident that the civil war was over for good.

Diplomats said that the ministers were trying to foster an atmosphere of peace by declaring the war finished. But they said much of their optimism seemed justified despite problems ahead.

"I think the Lebanese war was over the day parliamentarians approved the Taif Pact in 1989 and ratified it into a national reconciliation pact with some of its articles brought into the constitution (last year)," said Prime Minister Omar Karami.

Taif gave the Muslim majority more say in the political system dominated by the Christians since independence in 1943.

"We are working to remove the scars of this war, rebuild the state and revive its institutions," said Karami, a Sunni Muslim.

Former Prime Minister Selim Hoss said he believed that the civil war was over for three reasons:

— Public opinion had turned overwhelmingly against guns and violence and would block any suggestion of a return to fighting.

— For the first time in the history of Lebanon's crisis, people had agreed on a whole mechanism to resolve differences, which had been used by external powers to fuel the fighting.

— The United States and other major international powers wanted peace in Lebanon following the victory of U.S.-led allies against Iraq. Washington was now preoccupied with trying to solve the Arab-Israeli dispute.

order. One refugee was shot and wounded in the neck on Friday, said Mr. Cottingham, who had returned from visiting the Turkish border camp at Isikveren.

Distribution of food and drinking water taken in by road was orderly, but refugees had to trek down a valley on foot to queue for the supplies then struggle through thick mud to get back up the steep mountainside to their camps.

"Turkish authorities are forcing the refugees to stay in difficult mountain terrain along the Turkish border, hampering relief efforts," he said.

"The Turkish authorities are afraid that if they let them further into Turkey they will face a long-term economic burden with token international support," he said.

He added: "The international community must pledge aid to Turkey for as long as it takes to set up the proposed United Nations-protected zone within Iraq to encourage the Turks to let the refugees come down from the mountains."

Many refugees desperately to

cross mountains into Iran and Turkey. Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said 900,000 Iraqi Kurds and 150,000 Shiite Muslims had crossed into Iran.

A jam of Kurdish refugees 60 kilometres long was pressing forward Saturday in hopes of crossing into Iran.

Undeterred by the savage storms that have lashed the snow-capped mountains all week, families have waited stoically for days for their turn to cross.

Some refugees simply squat, wrapped in blankets, among boulders on the pass, despite the near constant downpour. Women sleep in shallow foxholes covered by blankets to try to escape rain and hail. Other people press against the rockface of the side of the road to keep at least part of their bodies dry.

Hungry, wet and cold, many complained Saturday that none of the foreign relief aid has reached them.

Hundreds of Kurds are believed to have died of illness and starvation, although no figures are available.

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Settlements

(Continued from page 1)
represented in a proposed regional peace conference.
During Mr. Baker's visit, the United States and Israel agreed

on a regional conference attended by Israel, Arab states and Palestinians under U.S. and possibly Soviet auspices. The idea has won wary backing from Egypt and Saudi Arabia but left many unanswered questions.
Both Mr. Arens and Mr. Sha-

mir depicted the talks with Mr. Baker as focusing on a limited area of agreement and avoiding two of the main obstacles to an Arab-Israeli meeting — representation of Palestinians in the talks and Jewish settlement in the occupied territories.

Israel has not moved from its deeply entrenched opposition to trading land for peace or stopping the settlements.
"In the discussion I had with Secretary Baker, we did not talk about the (Palestinian) delegation at all. The composition of the

delegation was not discussed so there is the impression that we have not yet gotten to this point," Mr. Arens said in an interview with Israeli Radio.
A year ago, a Baker proposal for Israeli talks with a Palestinian delegation in Cairo broke down.

Masri

(Continued from page 1)

in the peace-making process and determine their own future. Jordan would not serve as a substitute for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the foreign minister stressed at the Geneva meeting.

Mr. Masri said that Jordan would attach importance to a feasible formula, "hot it must be clear to all that the objective of the peace-making process should be to reach a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the international legitimacy."

Mr. Masri said in a statement following his meeting with Mr. Baker in Geneva Friday that he informed the U.S. Secretary that Jordan would attend a Middle East peace conference only if it is based on the principle that Israel return occupied Arab territories in exchange for peace.

Commenting on the outcome of the talks Mr. Masri said he was moderately optimistic about Mr. Baker's drive to start the negotiations.

Bush

(Continued from page 1)

the Soviet Union, China and France heard British Ambassador David Hannay describe "elements of a resolution should Iraq fail to cooperate with U.N. humanitarian missions or mount a frontal attack against the Kurds," diplomats said.

Britain has been pushing the idea of safe havens or temporary refugee camps in northern Iraq where aid could be administered to the Kurds.

After an initial cool reception, the United States supported the concept providing it stopped short of establishing an official U.N. enclave that would appear to be carving up Iraq's territory.

Currently no one, including the British, is pushing for immediate action on a resolution and few U.S. officials believe there will be one.

A British aid worker said Saturday that aid drops by air to Kurdish refugees caused chaos and that food brought in by road was distributed in a more orderly way.

Christian Aid information officer Martin Cottingham told reporters who aircraft made drops the strongest refugees ran to grab supplies but others were left with nothing.

Turkish soldiers fired over refugees' heads to try to keep

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Fendick upsets Garrison in Florida quarterfinals

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (R) — The \$350,000 Bausch and Lomb championships is quickly turning into a discovery missing for unseeded Patty Fendick, who upset fourth-seeded Zina Garrison 6-1 6-4 in the quarterfinals Friday.

"This is probably the best result in my life, said the 72nd-ranked Fendick, playing in her first clay court event since the U.S. clay courts in 1983. "I have no clue (what I'm doing to win), and don't let me."

Top-seeded Steffi Graf and second-seeded Gabriela Sabatini continue on their collision course toward Sunday's final. Graf dominated sixth-seeded Natalia Zvereva 6-0 6-2 and Sabatini did the same, beating fifth-seeded Helena Sukova 6-2 6-1.

Fendick credits much of her success to a Canadian tennis coach, Duby Petrovic, whom she referred to as "my claycourt guru." He came to Amelia Island for vacation and ended up coaching Fendick en route.

The second-ranked Graf is surprised to find her semifinal opponent is Fendick and not another American by the name of Garrison.

"I never expected her to be a claycourt player and I don't think she did, either," said Graf, the defending champion here. "I saw her play her second set today and technically, she's playing well."

Sabatini, who was a light cold, meets third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the other semifinal. The fifth-ranked Spaniard beat seventh-seeded Leila Meskhi, a finalist at last week's Hilton Head tournament, 6-1 7-6 (7-1) in the other quarterfinal.

Fendick played smart — she didn't play and constantly fed back on last year's Wimbledon finalist. Garrison had no answers for Fendick's tactics.

"It was a bad day, it's a shame," said the eighth-ranked Garrison, after the loss.



Graf

"This was one of the worst matches I've played in my career."

Fendick broke Garrison twice in the first set, but in the second set Garrison broke serve first in the second game. Fendick, who sprained her ankle in her first round match and wears a knee brace since having surgery last year, recouped the break in the next game.

It was the ninth game that sealed Garrison's fate. At 30-15, she double faulted twice in a row to give Fendick the break point opportunity she needed.

If the fourth-ranked Sabatini reaches Sunday's final, she replaces Martina Navratilova as the third-ranked player in the world. The way Sabatini is playing,

she looks like she's number one.

"I've been confident and playing well," admitted Sabatini, who is looking for her fourth tournament title of 1991 here. "I'm trying to keep going to the net."

The 13th-ranked Sukova posed a few problems for Sabatini — the games weren't all quick and easy — but the Argentine was always in command. She broke Sukova in the sixth and eighth games of the first set.

In the second set, there were breaks in the second, third and fourth game with Sabatini taking a 3-1 lead. After blasting a forehand return past Sukova on her second break point in the sixth game, Sabatini needed only four points on her serve to finish the match.

McNeil wins women's title in Japan

TOKYO (AP) — American Lori McNeil Saturday posted her second victory of the season, winning the women's singles title at the Japan Open Tennis Championships.

Top seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden, meanwhile, won his semifinal match and will face second seed Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia in the men's singles final Sunday.

Seventh-seeded McNeil came from behind to beat second-seeded Sabine Appelmans of Belgium 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 on the hard court of the Ariake Coliseum. Appelmans jumped to a 3-0 lead over an erratic McNeil in the first set. The two players kept the next four games, but Appelmans broke in the eighth.

McNeil, who won the singles title in the Colorado Tennis Classic in February, then began coming to the set and playing a serve-and-volley game. After two deuces, McNeil broke in the first game. Appelmans broke in the fourth, but McNeil broke back in

the fifth after five deuces. McNeil also broke in the seventh game.

McNeil broke in three games in the third set, but blew two break points in the seventh game before finally winning.

The 27-year-old earned \$27,000 U.S., while Appelmans, 18, won \$13,500.

Top seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden, seeking his fourth Japan Open title, beat fifth-seeded American Michael Chang, the 1989 French open champion, 7-5, 6-2.

The match was suspended nearly 40 minutes as rainwater leaked from the ceiling of Japan's first retractable roofed coliseum.

Edberg, trailing 1-4 in the first set, won six of the next seven games.

In the second set, Edberg broke in the fifth game and kept the next game without losing a point. Edberg also broke in the seventh game after two deuces, as Chang double faulted and often hit into the net.

Lendl of Czechoslovakia, playing his first match in five weeks, held off fourth-seeded American Jim Courier, 6-4, 6-1 to set up the all-European final with Edberg Sunday.

"I was pleased with my play," Lendl said. "I hit the ball well and I was moving well. It was getting to the ball well and that makes it easy to hit once you are there."

The men's singles winner gets \$137,500.

"He (Edberg) served really well," Chang said. "I was never able to get as many returns as I normally would like to."

Sunday's match will be a replay of the 1989 final in which Edberg beat Lendl 6-3 2-6 6-4.

"Playing Ivan is always a challenge. I've had to play great tennis to beat him," said Edberg who is seeking the Japan Open title for the third successive year.

Chiappucci wins Basque cycling race

ELGETA, Spain (AP) — Claudio Chiappucci of Italy finished ninth and sixth in the final two stages and won the 31st Tour of the Basque Country cycling race by more than two minutes. Chiappucci, who had a two-minute-and-14-second lead over the rest of the field after Thursday's stage, finished 2:17 ahead of Johan Bruyneel, who won the second of the two stages Friday and moved from fifth to

second while cutting 20 seconds into Chiappucci's advantage over him.

Bruyneel, of Belgium, won the 7.2-kilometre individual time trial uphill Elgeta Mountain Pass, in 14 minutes and 17 seconds. Marino Lejarreta was second, eight seconds behind, and Ivan Ivanov of the Soviet Union was third, 13 seconds behind Bruyneel.

Chiappucci, who became the overall leader Wednesday after

winning the third leg, finished sixth in 14:36 and completed the 930-kilometre Basque race in 19 hours, 56 minutes and 9 seconds.

Earlier Friday, Chiappucci finished ninth in a pack of cyclists, eight seconds behind first sector winner Raul Alcala. The Mexican finished the 98-kilometre leg sector, including three mountain passes, between Ataun and Elorrio in 2:21:07.

Pessoa wins world show-jumping finals

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (R) — Nelson Pessoa, the 55-year-old veteran from Brazil, sped through a first round event and two jump-offs on special envoy to win the second leg of the World Cup Show Jumping finals.

Clearing a total of 24 obstacles of 1.6 metres in three faultless rides, Pessoa demonstrated the skills which took him four times to the Olympics in three different decades and five times to World Cup finals in the 1980s.

Thirty-five years after his Olympic debut, Pessoa completed the last jump-off in 32.14 seconds to fend off a challenge from Canadian Ian Millar who finished as runner-up on Czar with 35.98.

The Brazilian, who lives in Belgium and competes in the European League, was fast also in Thursday's first event.

Thursday's winner Otto Becker of Germany retained first place overall on Optibears Pamina

point into Sunday's final round after placing joint ninth Friday. Pessoa was lying second in the standings, two points behind.

Briton John Whitaker, the title holder on Henderson Milton who was third overnight, was also among the 12 riders in joint ninth place with four faults in the first round.

He was in joint third place overall, with European League winner Roger-Yves Bot of France on Norton de Rhuys.

Women hope to give U.S. a soccer title

NEW YORK (AP) — Even if its name can't, maybe the women can give the United States a soccer championship.

While the United States struggled to qualify for last year's World Cup, its first appearance in the finals in 40 years, and then finished 23rd out of 24 teams, America's women's team is considered one of the best in the world — now all it has to do is prove it.

The team hopes to get its chance at the first women's World Cup in China this November, when 12 teams will compete for a first-ever title in one of soccer's last remaining growth areas.

Five teams from Europe and Scandinavia already have qualified: Germany, Italy, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

The United States will try to qualify next week, vying for the one berth out of the North-Central American region.

"Qualifying is what makes me nervous," said U.S. coach Dorrance, who also coaches the University of North Carolina women's team. "Only one team survives. It's a one-shot game with our biggest competition."

"That's a major factor. Canada

has excellent talent. Our challenge is to go match fit."

Last summer, the U.S. women were together for several months and completed their training with a dominating performance in the North American Cup in Minnesota.

By the end of August, Dorrance's charges easily won the championship 3-0 over West Germany, then considered the best team in the world.

It was not the first time the U.S. women had enjoyed some international success. Three years ago in China at the first international FIFA Women's Tournament, also a 12-team event, the United States advanced to the quarterfinals, where it lost 1-0 to eventual tournament winner Norway.

Norway was the country that pushed for recognition of women's soccer, proposing at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico a tournament and eventual championship.

Not coincidentally, Norway, along with Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Italy also are considered favorites for November's championship.

"The world game for women is young," Dorrance said. "Other

teams haven't had a chance to shoot ahead of us."

Most of the U.S. team is made up of college players or recent graduates, a traditional talent pool for many amateur sports in the United States, while many European teams are much older.

"Our team is made of extraordinary individuals that can prepare without coaches," said Michelle Akers-Stahl, a 25-year-old forward-midfielder who with 27-year-old April Heinrichs makes up the heart of the U.S. attack.

"It's a big, big sacrifice to play on this team," Akers-Stahl said. In the United States, the U.S. Federation already was scheduled the women's team for a Germany tour in May and other countries in Europe throughout the summer, hoping it will serve as preparation for the championship.

If women's soccer is an emerging sport, it also is rather obscure — especially in the United States. Dorrance said he doesn't mind that part.

"I like our niche," he said. And until the men get much better, he also gets to carry the banner of U.S. soccer pride with him.

Agassi bundled out of Barcelona

BARCELONA (R) — Argentina's Guillermo Perez-Roldan completed the rout of the top seeds in the Barcelona ATP Tennis Tournament Friday when he beat Andre Agassi 6-0 6-7 7-6 in the last eight.

The defeat of the third-seeded American means all the top six seeds in the \$650,000 tournament have been eliminated.

Perez-Roldan, seeded 11, goes through to play Sergi Bruguera of Spain, seeded 15, in the semifinals Saturday.

The other semifinal will be between unseeded Martin Jaito of Argentina and Spain's Emilio Sanchez, the highest seed left in

at number seven. Agassi did not have a chance throughout the first set against Perez-Roldan, who completely outplayed him.

In the second set, each player repeatedly broke the other's service. When the set went to a tiebreak, Agassi grabbed a quick advantage and won it 7-4.

The American led 5-3 in the final set and looked bound for the semifinals. But Perez-Roldan broke him and then levelled at 5-5.

Agassi went to 6-5 and held two match points but again was pulled back by the determined

Argentine who levelled at 6-6 and took the deciding tiebreak 7-3.

Bruguera, who Thursday disposed of top seed Boris Becker of Germany, was always too good for Andrei Chesnokov of the Soviet Union Friday and ran out a 6-2 7-5 winner.

The Spanish Davis Cup player has been in fine form and has not yet dropped a set in the tournament.

Sanchez was given a real battle by Italy's Omar Camporese before winning 7-6 4-6 7-5 and could face a tough test against Jaito, who beat Finland's Veli Paloheimo in three sets.

Cardona wins IBC belt

ALBANY, New York (AP) — Santos Cardona knocked Kevin Pompey down and out with a thundering overhead right late in the eighth round to capture the Intercontinental Boxing Council (IBC) welterweight title.

When the eighth round began Thursday night it was still anybody's fight. Both boxers headed what appeared to be hard shots in

the first few seconds of the round, but both struggled them off as they had no effect.

But the 25-year-old Cardona, a Venezuelan fighting out of San Juan, Puerto Rico, crushed Pompey with one devastating blow at 2:16. Pompey got up for a standing eight count, but referee Joe Santapaz stopped the fight, giving Cardona the title.

GOREN BRIDGE

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Neither vulnerable. East deals.
NORTH
♠ 5 4 3
♥ K 7 6 4 3 2
♦ A K 3
♣ 8 4

WEST EAST
♠ A J 10 9 2 ♠ K 7
♥ Q 10 8 5 ♥ Q 9
♦ 2 ♦ 10 6
♣ K 3 ♣ J 10 9 7 6 5 2

SOUTH
♠ A 8 6 3
♥ Void
♦ Q J 9 7 5 4 3
♣ A Q

The bidding:
East South West North
Pass 1 3 ♣ Pass
3 Dbl 4 ♣ 5 ♣
Pass Pass Dbl Pass

—Major two-suiter.

Opening lead: Two of ♣. Once in a while a hand turns up in a tournament which is a perfect double-dummy problem. This deal is from the recent World Olympiad in Geneva, Switzerland. The winning line was found by Jean-Claude Solari of France. Can you do as well looking at all the cards?

West's jump to three clubs promised a major-two-suiter and East's three diamonds showed no prefer-

ence between hearts and spades. The rest of the auction was natural; however, we doubt whether we would have doubled a grand slam with the West hand.

West's trump lead got the defense off to a good start. With a sure spade loser and probable club loser, declarer's problem was to score two ruffs in dummy. Also, East had to be kept off lead to prevent the defenders from leading another trump.

Declarer did well by winning the first trick in dummy and leading a spade. East flew in with the king, declarer took the ace and made the key return of the eight of spades. West, who had unblocked the nine, was forced to win with the ten. On the spade continuation, declarer could not afford to ruff with the eight, since East would have been able to overruff. Declarer's solution was most elegant — instead of ruffing, South discarded a club from dummy.

Now declarer was in control. When West persevered with spades, declarer ruffed high on the table, came to hand with the ace of clubs and ruffed a club with dummy's last trump. A heart ruff provided the entry to draw the last trump and claim the doubled contract.

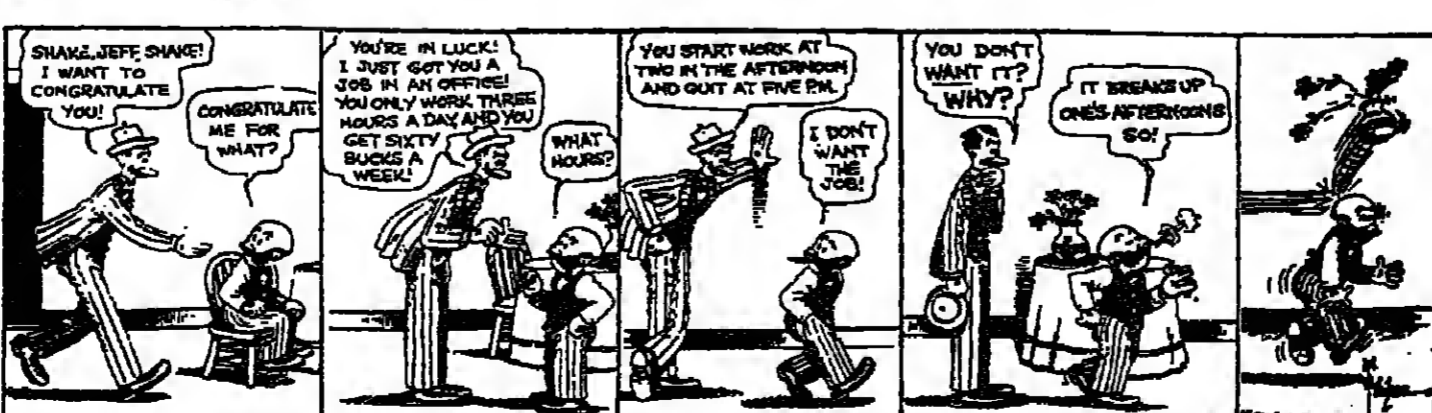
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY APRIL 14, 1991

Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You want to have a good time but some duty requires that you first take sometime out to study the desires of those about you and help them get ahead.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) An argument is brewing, if not already in motion, between a member of your own clan and an outsider that threatens to engulf you unless careful.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Forget those projects that are bugging you and go to the services, studies of your choice and get the answers that mean the most to you now.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are now able to find the answers to that pressing financial problem if you do not worry about it so much and let it work itself out.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your own household can give you some anxiety now if you look at what is being done in your house in too a personal a manner so get out and do what you like instead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Let nothing deter you now from getting those intimate matters attended to early so you can later get out in the world of activity and make headway.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your need for more friendship may make you do something now that is very unwise from a financial point of view so take time out to please a chum.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to Novem-

ber 21) Think over what those in a powerful position expect of you but do nothing that can make them feel you do not respect or wish to follow their directions.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) There are a number of conditions demanding your attention that you need to meditate and to concentrate upon before going ahead.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get together with good friends and forget that suggestion made by an impersonal advisor who feels you should lose away many of your present contacts.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Whatever means the most to you with an associate needs to be looked at from a worldly viewpoint instead of from a purely personal standpoint.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have many new ideas you want to put in motion but you also have lots of work to do that should not be skirted at any cost so carry through.

Today's child: If your child were born today she or he will be constantly tested early in life as to whether he or she has self control to handle conditions that spring up in their pioneering vocation. Controlling one's self and patience are two very special lessons that will need to be learned.

"The stars impel, they do not compel, what you make of your life is largely up to you."

THE BETTER HALF.

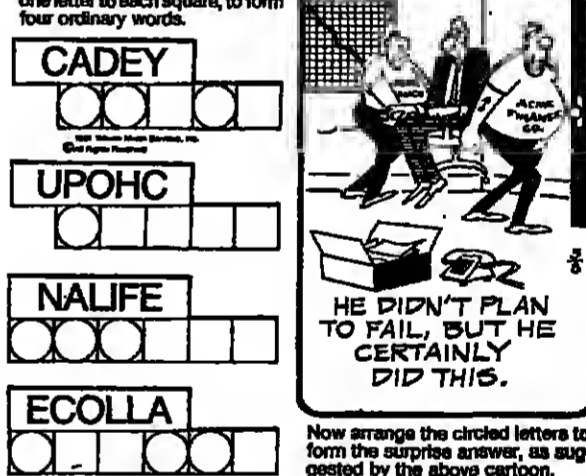
By Harris



"Stanley cheated on me once. He was indifferent with another woman."

JUMBLE

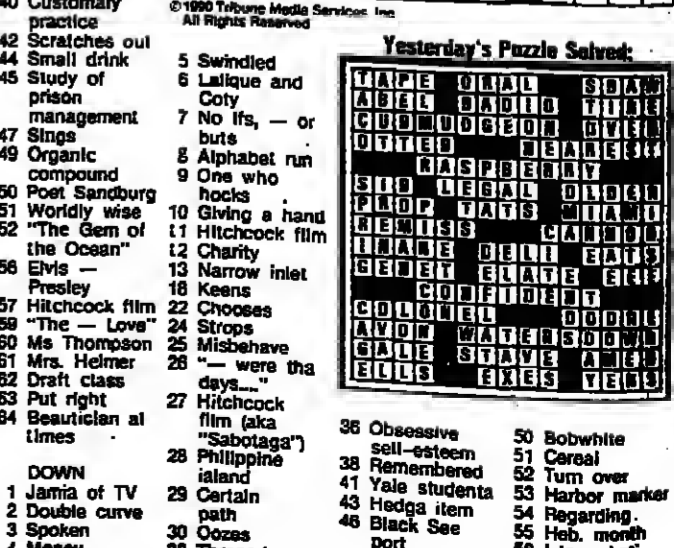
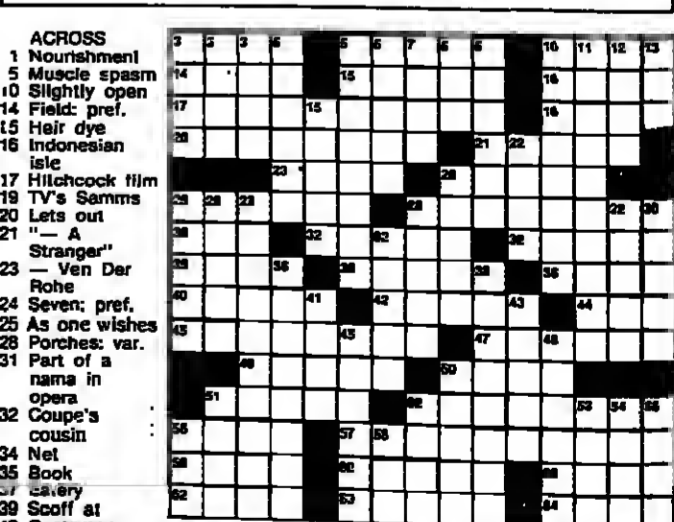
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer: CADEY TO UPOHC (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BROOD POUND METRIC SCENIC
Answer: What the hangman said when the culprit was reprieved — IT'S "NOOSE" TO ME

THE Daily Crossword by Bernice Gordon



U.S. retail inflation retreats for first time in five years

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. consumer prices fell 0.1 per cent in March, the first retreat in almost five years, in a sign that economic weakness is slowing down inflation.

The Labour Department report on Friday removes a key obstacle in the path towards lower interest rates, financial analysts said. But lacking clear signals from the Federal Reserve (Fed) they remained perplexed over its next move on monetary policy.

The central bank may prefer to wait for irrefutable signs the U.S. economy still is mired in recession before loosening credit again, analysts said. This would skirt the danger that lower rates would reignite a fresh round of price gains.

It got some evidence of persistent economic weakness in a separate report on business inventories on Friday.

The Commerce Department said stocks of unsold goods shrank by 0.2 per cent in February even though sales rose by 0.5 per cent — a sign that businesses are keeping inventories lean in expectation demand will remain weak in months ahead.

The monthly business sales rate of \$529.6 billion, although above the January level, was still 1.5 per cent lower than a year earlier, when they were \$537.6 billion.

And consumer confidence,

hailed as the key to economic resurgence, also may be ebbing.

After bounding forward as the Gulf war ended, a Washington Post survey found that 51 per cent of people questioned nationwide between April 5 and 9 believe the nation is seriously heading on the wrong track.

That's up from 39 per cent at the end of February. Other recent consumer surveys had shown optimistic outlooks.

Despite this set of gloomy news, Martin Regalia, chief economist for the National Council of Savings Institutions, said he expects the Fed to wait for yet more signs that economic contraction is continuing before cutting rates.

"They don't yet have enough data showing weakness out there to suggest the return to growth forecast for this summer is in jeopardy," Regalia said.

There are hints of recovery — home construction picked up in February, purchase orders improved and the government's main forecasting tool pointed to an upswing.

And the spending power of American workers grew 0.2 per cent in March and 0.6 per cent in February, Labour said.

However, the latest retail sales figures sent conflicting signals. March sales fell 0.8 per cent but that was offset by a steep upward revision in February sales to 2.0 per cent gain.

Cut in Soviet exchange rate not seen as spur to investment

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union's decision to slash the tourist exchange rate for convertible currencies will do little to stimulate foreign investment, Western businessmen have said.

"The decision was not intended to improve foreign business activity but to eliminate the black market without eliminating the right of Soviet businesses to work with hard currency," said an American attorney based in Moscow.

It became effective last week when the Soviet foreign trade bank began offering foreign visitors 27.6 roubles for a dollar compared with the previous tourist rate of 5.74.

At 27.6 roubles to the dollar, the rate is near what Soviet business publications say black-market traders offer.

Earlier, the state central bank Gosbank announced that Soviet citizens travelling abroad would have to pay the rate to purchase a maximum of \$200 a year for expenses outside the country.

Foreign organisations based in Moscow and their employees have little use for roubles because they must pay for almost all goods and services in hard currency by cash, credit card or bank transfer.

"We use roubles only for petty cash," Stephen Prior of office

equipment maker Rank Xerox Ltd. said.

With Soviet shops almost empty of goods, foreigners in Moscow obtain their own supplies from special Soviet-run hard currency stores and foreign joint venture shops or import them from the West.

"Even tourists will not be affected much by the rate cut except when they buy postage stamps or find the rare taxi that accepts roubles," James Kober, vice president of American Express Co.'s Moscow office said.

Many business transactions will still be carried out at the commercial rate of 1.75 roubles to the dollar.

The commercial rate will be applied when foreign firms withdraw cash or make payments from their hard currency accounts, a senior Gosbank official said.

Foreign residents with Moscow bank accounts in hard currency will also be debited at the commercial rate if they withdraw roubles or use their funds to pay rouble bills.

"The change in the tourist rate does not affect Western businesses at all," Grant Sutherland, Rank Xerox's chief representative in Moscow said.

The tourist rate will fluctuate with the market rate set at bi-

weekly sessions of the new currency exchange. The currency exchange replaces periodic auctions held over the past year.

The auctions were limited to official Soviet organisations and enterprises but foreign-backed joint ventures will be allowed to utilise the new currency exchange.

Actual trading will be conducted by banks that qualify for licenses from Gosbank. Eleven banks are eligible to participate in Tuesday's session. Businesses can buy and sell currency by sending orders to one of the banks and paying a commission.

The new currency exchange, rather than the cut in the tourist exchange rate, is seen by some Westerners as a boost to foreign investment.

"Theoretically the new regime gives joint ventures a chance to sell roubles for hard currency and transfer rouble profits to their home country," Hubert Pandza of Deutsche Bank said.

Officially registered foreign businesses and joint ventures also will be able to use the exchange to buy cheaper roubles to fund operating expenses and supplies that can be purchased for the Soviet currency, he said.

"The commercial rate will decrease in importance over time," Pandza said.

Iraq starts campaign to increase agricultural production

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq is offering farmers higher prices for crops as part of a nation-wide campaign announced Friday to improve this year's harvest and beat a United Nations trade embargo.

Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Abdul Wahab Mahmoud Abdullah Al Sabbagh said the campaign was launched under the slogan: "Agriculture ... a weapon in the hands of the leader for thwarting the economic embargo."

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted him as saying President Saddam Hussein was personally involved in supporting the scheme.

A global trade ban was imposed on Iraq four days after its invasion of Kuwait. After its troops left the emirate, Baghdad was allowed to import food and some other essential items but its trade is still disrupted by U.N. restrictions and the effects of the war.

IMF talks with Sudan to resume in May

CAIRO (R) — Talks between Sudan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will begin in May, the Egyptian national Middle East News Agency has said. The agency quoted the Sudanese Finance and Planning Minister as saying the talks would start in the first week of May.

Last September, the IMF declared Sudan a non-cooperative country for refusing to devalue its pound, increase interest rates and for its arrears in repayments to the fund since 1984. Sudan, with a \$12 billion foreign debt, said such harsh steps would raise the price of basic goods sharply.

Gencor to close gold mine this year

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Gencor Ltd., the world's second-largest mining house, has announced it would close underground operations at one of its 11 gold mines by the end of the year.

A company official said lower gold prices and high inflation, along with rising wage demands, forced the virtual shutdown of its Stilfontein mine, which employs 2,950 people.

The mine, which began producing gold in 1952, is the first gold mine in South Africa to cease all underground operations in recent history. South Africa is the world's largest gold producer.

Gary Mande, general manager of Gencor's gold division, said Stilfontein accounted for less than one per cent of the 600 tons of gold South Africa produced annually.

But he said the shutdown represented a "serious industry trend."

"This is the first gold mine to throw in the towel and say we just can't go on," Mande said.

Chamber of Mines President Clive Knobbs said last week more than 190,000 miners — 15 per cent of the workforce — worked in mines that were unprofitable at current gold prices.

Recent studies have shown that 20 to 10 per cent of gold in South Africa is being produced at a loss.

Mande said 2,300 Stilfontein employees would be dismissed by the end of the year. More than 2,500 of the 2,950 employees are black.

A Gencor statement said the mine last year paid 71 million rand (about \$28 million) in wages and salaries, most of which was spent in the Stilfontein area, about 160 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg.

"We realise that this will have a serious effect on the community, but there was no other viable option," Mande said.

Algeria launches programme to ease economic hardships

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian government has launched a multi-billion-dollar programme to streamline the economy and satisfy the demands of trade unions which staged a two-day general strike last month.

In the run-up to the country's first multi-party elections due on June 27, opposition parties and trade unions have voiced widespread discontent over economic hardships caused by a shift from a socialist system to a market economy.

The latest measures by the government of the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) are expected to increase its chances with the electorate.

Social Affairs Minister Muhammad Ghrib told a local radio the government decided Thursday to increase child allowances by more than 300 per cent to 140 dinars (\$88).

The monthly allowance had been frozen for 29 years.

To stabilise consumer prices,

the government will spend 27 billion dinars (\$1.5 billion) this year on subsidies for basic commodities, representing 14.5 per cent of the state budget.

The government will also devote 130 billion dinars (\$7.4 billion) in a programme to streamline state enterprises. No details were given.

The decisions answer the main grievances of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) which staged a general strike in March in protest against the surge in the cost of living.

The stoppage paralysed major economic sectors, including the petroleum industry.

Last October the government more than doubled the guaranteed minimum wage and then raised it again in January to 2,000 dinars (\$144) a month.

In a joint statement, the government and the UGTA said they would hold further talks next month to discuss productivity, wages and prices.

U.S. firms in Gulf seek tax breaks for workers

ATLANTA (R) — American businesses in the Gulf are urging Washington to give breaks to U.S. workers in the region to avoid being priced out of the lucrative market, executives have said.

Without income tax relief for employees, American firms are finding it cheaper to hire professionals from Europe or Japan, said member of a Gulf-American business delegation.

Under current law, the first \$70,000 of income earned overseas by an American worker is not taxed.

But the executives said salaries paid to Americans must be higher to cover such items as private schools and travel leave to make living standards comparable to the United States.

U.S. companies are expected to land 70 per cent of the contracts to rebuild Kuwait, but "because of America's discriminatory tax laws, these contracts will not necessarily translate into employment opportunities overseas for Americans," said Theodore Bevee, chairman of the American Business Council of the Gulf countries.

"They're being replaced by nationals from our major competitor nations," he said. Most nations tax their citizens on the basis of residence rather than citizenship, said Bevee, a Saudi-based executive for the California industrial equipment supplier Ameron Inc.

The 30-member American business group has asked Congress to consider a two-year "emergency tax" moratorium aimed at stimulating employment of Americans in the Gulf. Bevee said in a telephone interview.

As an alternative, the group has also proposed boosting the tax-free income threshold to about \$100,000 a year.

Members said the changes in tax policy were needed for American firms to capitalise on post-war goodwill towards the United States and help reverse a long decline in America's share of the Gulf's \$50 billion annual import market.

"We have a once-in-100-years opportunity to penetrate a market, and if we throw it away we have only ourselves to blame," said David Stockwell, a lawyer based in Dubai who represents several firms, including General Motors Corp.

Some 700 U.S.-affiliated companies now operate in the Gulf, with an estimated 30,000 Americans holding civilian jobs in the region, the group said.

Haiti asks wealthy businessmen for loans to combat poverty

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — The new Haitian government Friday called on wealthy citizens to lend it money by Monday to help begin pulling the country out of its deep poverty.

"We call on all Haitians who are able to lend thousands or millions of dollars to fight against the high cost of living and create jobs," said a communiqué containing the "urgent request."

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a radical Roman Catholic priest, took office in February on a promise to bring economic justice to Haiti's poor. But he inherited an economic morass and empty public coffers.

The loans would be repaid after four years with five per cent interest, officials said.

The fund would be used to clean up cities and repair badly rutted roads while creating jobs in an impoverished country where most people live on a few dollars a week and unemployment runs as high as 60 per cent.

"It's very urgent," Commerce Secretary Smarck Michel said. He urged businessmen to take part in the loan programme "to show solidarity with the government."

Some businessmen said they were startled by the strange and sudden request.

One businessman, who is basically sympathetic to the government but who did not want to be identified, said: "People want to help but they were taken back by the request and by the lack of precision on exactly what the funds are for and how they would be reimbursed."

The Monday deadline, he added, "makes people feel a degree of pressure."

Haiti, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Per capita income is about \$350.

ICAO estimates world's airlines lost \$2.6 b in '90

MONTREAL (R) — Commercial airlines around the world suffered total operating losses of \$2.6 billion last year, the industry's first loss since 1982, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) said Friday.

Last year's bleak performance compared with a profit of \$7.9

billion in 1989, the U.N. agency said.

ICAO blamed a weak economic climate, exacerbated in the second part of the year by soaring fuel and insurance costs, reflecting the crisis in the Gulf.

The agency said its preliminary estimates showed airlines belonging to ICAO member states suf-

fered a loss of 1.3 per cent of operating revenues, estimated at \$198 billion in 1990.

It said airlines recorded a profit of 4.4 per cent of operating revenues of \$179 billion in the previous year, and estimated that the airlines' expenses over the same period surged 17 per cent to \$200.5 billion in 1990.

India lifts ban on Sumitomo-led Japanese consortium

NEW DELHI (R) — New Delhi has lifted a 16-month ban on a consortium led by the Sumitomo Corp. that has prevented it from receiving contracts in the Indian petroleum industry, Commerce Minister Subramanian Swamy said Friday.

"Sumitomo had made a representation for the ban to be lifted and they have agreed to abide by conditions laid down," Swamy told Reuters.

Swamy, who is also law and justice minister, declined to specify the Indian government's conditions.

India imposed the ban on Sumitomo and the other members of the Japanese consortium in December 1989, charging it with paying illegal commissions to an Indian company to win two pipeline contracts.

The government said that Sumitomo violated the terms of the contract it won in 1984 when it paid 65 million rupees (then

about \$4 million) to Delhi-based Jyotsna Holdings.

The other members of the consortium included Mitsui, Marubeni Corp. C. Itoh and Co. Ltd., Mitsubishi, Kawasaki, NKK Corp. and Sumitomo Heavy Industries, government officials said.

"In my mind the people who should be prosecuted are Jyotsna. There was no real violation on the consortium's part and the cabinet felt that a blanket ban was not in keeping with fair business practice," Swamy said in a telephone interview.

Reports that the ban had been lifted surfaced soon after Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha left for Tokyo Tuesday to secure financial aid to ease India's economic problems.

Diplomats said the move to withdraw the ban was aimed at strengthening India's requests to Tokyo, which Swamy denied.

Japanese accelerate industrial production

WASHINGTON (AP) — Japan's industry, though much smaller than this country's has been increasing its production a lot faster, according to new figures from the International Monetary Fund.

Since 1985, Japan's increase has been 26 per cent — six per cent of its last year. The U.S. increase has been 11 per cent, but for 1990 the increase accounted for only one per cent. Total U.S. production is about three times Japan's.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that in January, production in Japan was rising by 10.8 per cent a year. U.S. industry, still in a slump, was declining at a rate of 5.5 per cent.

Statisticians say a month is too short a period to make judgements on, but the CIA's figures show Japan's production taking off in 1987, growing much more rapidly than production in this country.

The CIA takes the year 1980 as a base. In 1987 the two countries had reached about the same level, close to an 18 per cent increase. Since then, Japan's curve has moved up steeply. By last November the increase in Japan over 1980 was about 55 per cent, while the American rise was not much over 25 per cent.

The fund said production continued to rise in the major industrial countries as a group, though the pace slowed last year. It was the eighth annual rise in a row though it amounted only to 1.8 per cent, just half the rise in 1989.

Since the recession year 1982 the increase has been almost a third: 31.8 per cent.

Looking at five leading countries, the fund found industrial production increases last year in West Germany as well as Japan and the United States, but no increase in Italy and a slight drop in Britain.

West Germany's performance in 1990 was as good as Japan's, a rise of six percentage points over the 1989 level. But its total increase since 1985 was less than Japan's — 17 per cent compared with 26 per cent.

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Buy	Sell		
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Pound Sterling	1202.2	Dutch guilder	356.6 358.7
Deutschemark	401.7	Swedish crown	111.9 112.6
Swiss franc	474.2	Italian lire (for 100)	54.3 54.5
French franc	119.0	Belgian franc (for 10)	195.6 196.8

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Soviet leader orders republics to resume production, delivery

MOSCOW (AP) — President Mikhail Gorbachev has ordered the country's republics to resume production and delivery of raw materials within a week, as spreading strikes threaten the national economy.

But there appeared no way Gorbachev could enforce the Friday night decree short of force, which damaged his authority when Soviet troops attacked Baltic secessionists in January.

The Communist Party Pravda said Saturday that Gorbachev's "anti-crisis" programme to end the labour crisis would be discussed by Supreme Soviet deputies in committee next week and be debated by the full legislature on April 22. The programme calls for market-oriented reform coupled with a moratorium on strikes and protests.

The newspaper Izvestia Saturday published statistics that showed an 8.2 per cent drop in overall coal production since the miners strike began on March 1. Coal-reliant industries reported sharp drops in production, including a 9 per cent drop in non-ferrous metal production, a 14 per cent cut in truck manufacturing and 9 per cent in tractor output.

Workers across the Soviet Union are increasingly angry with

Kremlin attempts to reform the economy while denying independence to any of the 15 Soviet republics.

Gorbachev's resignation is considered the main demand of many strikers.

A strike committee in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev called for a one-day warning strike and mass rally in support of coal miners next Tuesday, the newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta said Saturday.

The newspaper quoted committee member Leonid Kovalchuk as saying the one-day strike "could become some sort of preparation to a general political strike in the Ukraine."

On Friday, steel workers threatened to join striking coal miners, and secessionist rail workers in Georgia tightened their stranglehold on cargo traffic, increasing pressure on Gorbachev.

Leaders of a 1½-day strike in Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, met for the second day Saturday with republic officials to set a schedule for talks on their demands, which include the resignation of the republic's leaders.

Minsk strike committee leader Grigory Gvozdek said he hoped to bring up political issues in Saturday's talks, while Moscow

Radio reported the Belaz truck factory had agreed to provide double wages by the end of the year.

An estimated 200,000 workers in the Minsk area walked off the job Wednesday, idling at least 64 factories until they agreed to suspend the strike during negotiations. They vowed to resume the walkout and organise a wider strike if their demands were not met.

But an estimated 300,000 coal miners from the Ukraine to the Pacific Ocean remained on strike, six weeks after scattered strikes began demanding pay raises.

Demands have grown to include sweeping government changes, including the transfer of national power to leaders of the republics and Gorbachev's ouster.

Workers from metallurgical mines and plants in the Ural Mountains city of Chelyabinsk endorsed the miners' demands Friday and voted to take action themselves unless officials consider their demands by April 20, the Soviet news agency (TASS) said.

In the southern Republics of Georgia, which declared independence Tuesday, Soviet Interior Ministry troops rounded up militiamen and confiscated arms, the independent news agency

Postfactum said.

Clashes between troops and Georgian nationalists were reported in the mountainous region of South Ossetia. The predominantly Muslim Ossetians seek independence for their enclave from traditionally Christian Georgia.

Protesting the presence of federal troops, rail workers in Georgia halted rail traffic through the republic, stranding about 80 trains loaded with food, medicine, raw materials and other goods, news reports said.

Only 310 out of 5,500 freight cars passed through Georgia en route to Armenia in the last two days, said TASS.

Georgian leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia announced the strike Thursday and said the Kremlin might be preparing for a military crackdown. "It looks like we should expect a broad anti-Georgian campaign," Gamsakhurdia told reporters in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi.

TASS did not say how many workers were represented or exactly what they were demanding. But it reported their plight "was comparable to that of the strikers — they are also underpaid and their social programmes are not being carried out."

Blasts hit blazing tanker off Genoa

GENOA, Italy (R) — A series of explosions rocked a blazing supertanker Saturday off northwest Italy as rescuers battled an oil spill threatening ecological disaster in the Mediterranean.

The blasts engulfed the 109,000-tonne Haven in a cloak of flames and smoke while experts fought to stop it spewing a million barrels of Iranian crude oil.

Police evacuated a seafloor shopping district at the small, nearby port of Arenzano. Port officials said the explosions sent more flaming oil into shallow waters in the Bay of Genoa.

The already-polluted Mediterranean is threatened with its worst oil spill if the Haven discharges its full cargo off the scenic Italian Riviera. Nearby fishing areas have already been ruined.

Europe's worst oil spill was in March 1978 when the Amoco Cadiz emptied 1.6 million barrels on to the Brittany coast.

"There was a series of explosions throughout the morning," an official at Arenzano said.

About 150 kilometres down the coast at Livorno, rescue workers searched a burnt-out ferry for the bodies of 140 people killed when it rammed into another tanker in Italy's worst post-war shipping disaster.

The sole survivor of the ferry, a 24-year-old sailor, said he and many other crew were watching a soccer match on television, the Juventus-Barcelona European Cup Winners' Cup semifinal, when the collision occurred Wednesday night.

The European commission said it was sending over \$1 million in emergency aid to victims of the ferry disaster and sending experts to stop oil spills devastating the Mediterranean.

Witnesses said Saturday's blasts appeared to cause the Cyprus-registered tanker Haven to sink even faster in the spot about two miles offshore where it was towed after a first explosion Thursday.

"It's a situation of total uncertainty. We can't even see the ship through the smoke. It's difficult to see if it's still floating or sunk," said an official of the Merchant Navy Ministry.

People in Arenzano said officials told other shops they might have to close later Saturday to give rescuers a free hand in coordinating efforts to limit the damage.

Three of the tanker's crew were killed and three others are still reported missing in Thursday's explosion set off by a fire on the 17-year-old Haven.

The tanker, which harbour officials said appeared to be two-thirds submerged, lies in waters some 50 metres deep.

An official said at least 400 square metres of sea was covered by blazing oil.

Gorbachev to unveil Pacific security plan

TOKYO (R) — Japan, wary of a huge Soviet military presence in the Far East, is expected to agree to negotiate a new Pacific security plan when President Mikhail Gorbachev arrives Tuesday.

Japanese officials said Saturday they expected Gorbachev and Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu to reach some agreement on a longstanding territorial dispute and Asia-Pacific regional security in three or four rounds of summit talks.

"We expect that the two will make some statement on the peace treaty and Japan's territorial claim, as well as regional security," a government official said.

Japan has refused to sign a peace treaty or consider improving economic and political ties with the Soviet Union until it returns four Pacific islands seized by the Red Army in 1945. Since then Tokyo has regarded its neighbour as a serious military threat.

Gorbachev could propose cooperation on regional problems such as the Cambodian civil war and offer to reduce the Soviet military presence on the disputed islands, Japanese newspapers said.

Last year, the Soviet Union called on Japan to initiate confidence-building measures such as joint military manoeuvres, exchange of military personnel and expanded talks on political and defence issues.

Gorbachev is expected to bring up the issue again and call for a reduction in the scale of training exercises in the North Pacific. He will also propose that Moscow and Tokyo inform one another ahead of military manoeuvres, news reports said.

Although no statistics are available, Defence Agency officials in Tokyo say the Soviet Union has increased the number of aircraft and missiles in the Far East.

The number of Soviet bombers and reconnaissance aircraft approaching northern Japan's airspace increased last year compared to previous years, Japanese Air Force officials told reporters recently.

The missile buildup is the result of Moscow's recent transfer of weapons from Eastern and Soviet Europe to the Soviet Far East, following the recent conventional forces in Europe (CFE) disarmament.

Lawyer: Kennedys tried to intimidate witness

PALM BEACH, Florida (R) — A lawyer representing the woman who says she was raped by a nephew of Senator Edward Kennedy accused the powerful U.S. family Friday of trying to intimidate a key witness.

The accusation came an hour after Palm Beach police released a report in which the woman said William Kennedy Smith tackled her, held her down and sexually assaulted her.



Mikhail Gorbachev

ment agreement.

Another concern is Moscow's Asian troop deployment. About 60 per cent of its Asian divisions, some 200,000 troops, could be readily deployed to Japan and other areas in the Pacific region.

Ten thousand of these troops are stationed on the four islands claimed by Japan but controlled by the Soviet Union since the end of World War II.

"Although Gorbachev is unlikely to offer to return the islands, he could propose to open negotiations on their future and possibly offer to demilitarise the disputed islands," said Hiroshi Kimura, a Sovietologist at Hokkaido University.

Kaifu and his aides are hoping for a resolution of the dispute over the islands of Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorofu. "Gorbachev started perestroika, allowed the democratisation of East Europe and the unification of Germany," Foreign Ministry spokesman Taiso Watanabe said Friday.

"He must be capable of doing dynamic changes in Asia as he has done in Europe."

Japanese officials say they would consider Gorbachev's visit a success if he conceded sovereignty over all four islands and returned two.

Although Moscow says the islands are part of the Kurile Chain it was given in the wartime Yalta agreement, it offered to return two islands in 1956 pending conclusion of a peace treaty.

But Soviet experts say the most to be expected is agreement to negotiate the future of the islands.

Don't cool your underwear — doctor

SINGAPORE (R) — Men worried that hot weather might make them sterile should not try to increase their sperm count by wearing frozen underwear, a Singapore doctor says.

Dr. Stephen Lim, joining a lively correspondence in the Straits Times newspaper on the effects of tight trousers and heat on male fertility, said high temperatures cut sperm production only when reproductive glands were already weak. Cooling things down by wearing refrigerated underwear was impractical, he said in a letter. "Refrigerated underwear has been tried in the United States but has proven to be too uncomfortable for daily use," he said.

Paula Abdul denies backup singer had lead vocals

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Pop star Paula Abdul went on the offensive in the biggest musical flap since Milli Vanilli proved to be phony halos, insisting the lead vocals on Forever Your Girl are forever hers. The singer-choreographer appeared at a Hollywood news conference to counter claims by backup singer Yvette Marine, who alleged in a superior court lawsuit she had "substantial participation" in some songs on the top selling album. "This angers me," Miss Abdul said in her first appearance since the lawsuit against Virgin Records was filed Monday. "I sing the lead on every single song on Forever Your Girl," Miss Abdul said, who went from a professional basketball cheerleader to successful recording artist and music video star, said Miss Marine was "trying to take a shortcut to success at the expense of all the work I've done."

A music expert cited by Virgin Records, Miss Abdul's record company, said he could find no hint of Miss Marine's voice on the lead tracks of the album, which has sold seven million copies since its release in 1988. "It remains possible, though I believe highly improbable, that a small percentage of Yvette's pilot track was blended or bled into some sections of the lead vocal mix, but if so, it is imperceptible," Fredric Lieberman, professor and chair of the board of studies in music at the University of California, Santa Cruz said in a statement.

Sri Lankan troops, rebels prepare for battle

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil separatist guerrillas and security forces have moved large numbers of men into a northern district as a big Sri Lankan New Year battle shapes up, local people said Saturday.

They said air force helicopters dropped leaflets at Thandikulam, near Vavuniya, asking people to leave the area. The army had also moved in heavily armed troops.

"These are signs of a massive

offensive," a farmer said by telephone from Vavuniya, 240 kilometres north of Colombo.

He said a large number of guerrillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had gathered close to army positions at Thandikulam.

Sources from the military and the Tigers were not available to comment on reports.

Sinhalese and Tamils are celebrating their new year, which be-

gins Sunday. Soldiers have been placed on alert against possible attacks by the guerrillas, who are fighting for a separate state for the minority Tamils.

"The terrorists have suffered severe setbacks this week in confrontations with the security forces and they might do something during the festive season to recoup their morale," a military official said.

Croatia forms guard; Serbia 'ready to fight'

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Croatia said it will form its own National Guard and Serbia's headline president was quoted as threatening to fight to protect ethnic Serbs living in Croatia.

Yugoslavia's two largest republics are feuding over the future of the nation's crisis-ridden federation. Their dispute has brought the country to the brink of civil war.

During talks to try to resolve the crisis Thursday, Yugoslavia's six regional presidents agreed to hold separate referendums on the issue in each republic by the end of May.

Croatia said its security forces would be reorganised to include a professional National Guard under the command of the republic's Defence Ministry, the state news agency Tanjug reported.

The National Guard will be entrusted with "guarding Croatia's constitutional system," the government statement said.

Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's communist president, pledged his republic would fight to protect the interests of ethnic Serbs living in Croatia.

"If we have to fight, we will fight," Milosevic said in remarks published Friday by the prominent Belgrade weekly, Nin. "I hope they will not be crazy enough to fight us."

His muscled him comments were made at a meeting of Serbian leaders on March 16 and were seen as a warning to Croatia.

He also instructed Serbia's government to prepare unspecified units "which will make us capable of defending the interests of our republic and the interests of Serbian people outside Serbia," the magazine said.

East European transition jeopardises women's rights

VIENNA (AP) — The women of Eastern Europe face a dilemma: how to keep the rights given them by egalitarian communism, yet change the social mores that weigh them down with the dual burden of work and family.

At a U.N.-sponsored conference in Vienna this week, women from seven East European countries and the Soviet Union met to discuss their quandary as their nations move toward full democracy and market economies.

It was the first as hoping to secure new ones, said Vesna Pesic, a sociologist from Belgrade. "We don't want to start from zero."

Under Marxist rules of egalitarianism, women in Eastern Europe had at least de jure equality which guaranteed them a certain quota of parliamentary representation, equal pay for equal work and, in most cases, the right to legal abortions.

As their democratic governments draft new legislation, however, many rights taken for granted under communism are slipping away. Poland and other governments, for example, are considering sharply restricting reproductive rights.

Also, few women have been chosen in the first free legislative elections, professions dominated

Seoul opposition demands minister's ouster

SEOUL (AP) — Opposition parties Saturday demanded the ouster of Defence Minister Lee Chong-koo for his controversial remarks on plans for a possible commando raid on North Korea's nuclear facilities.

The three parties charged that Lee's words during a meeting with local newspaper editors Friday could jeopardise inter-Korea dialogue and heighten tension on the divided peninsula.

"He should be fired immediately. His statement was not

only fatal to inter-Korea relations but also could give the North an excuse to launch a surprise attack," said Yoon Jae-Kul, deputy spokesman of the main opposition group.

Yoon called Lee's remarks "a grave slip of the tongue that inflicted irreparable damage to inter-Korea relations."

The no. 2 opposition group, the Democratic Party, also demanded Lee's dismissal and said his remarks might hurt "an atmosphere of conciliation" that

has begun to appear in relations between the two Koreas.

And the People's Party, made up mostly of dissidents, said Lee's words could hinder peaceful unification of the peninsula.

The defence minister, speaking to a group of local newspaper editors Friday, accused North Korea of continuing a military buildup and talked of plans for a possible commando raid on its nuclear facilities, unless Pyongyang joins an international safeguard agreement.

At the same time, some women might prefer to stay at home, but cannot afford to. With rising inflation, families must rely on two incomes to survive.

"Many consider paid work a necessary evil," Lado said, particularly those who perform manual labour and have no career prospects.

Working women also bear a dual burden. They care for the home and children, do the shopping and, in rural areas, are largely responsible for tending private farm plots to supplement scarce food supplies.

Shortages are a way of life, so women spend many valuable hours standing in lines to buy staples. Lack of technology also robs women of free time.

In Albania, Europe's poorest country, for example, many families do not own refrigerators or washing machines.

But trends toward family values also appear to have economic roots in countries where streamlining loss-making industries and privatisation are squeezing thousands of people out of jobs.

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